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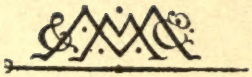

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# PREFACE

A MEASURE of acceptance with which the little volume of *Literary Recreations* was fortunate enough to meet has emboldened me to put out this further collection of jottings in a library. The pieces here collected, none of which has been printed before, were written, like those in the former volume, in occasional leisure from official duties, and make no claim other than may be founded on the hope that what has interested one saunterer in a library may meet with sympathetic readers outside.

I said in the Preface to my former volume that I should be well content if it served to pass an idle hour; but I also half confessed that I indulged myself with a further thought. The essays were put together with some notion that they might perchance be found of interest to students of the art of literature, and illustrate the relations which should exist between

literature and journalism. In the present collection there is a connecting thread in recurring allusions to Greek and Latin literature. As these essays are written by one whose scholarship is rusty, and are addressed to "the general reader," they may perhaps serve to illustrate the interest which is to be found in the ancient classics, even at second-hand, and the relation which should exist between the study of English and of classical literature. It is the object of what is called "The New Teaching" to advance such study by making the teaching of the classics more literary and less grammatical than heretofore. To those who advocate this movement may I commend, if they do not already know it, the Address which Lord Dufferin delivered at St. Andrews in 1891? Rectorial Addresses are often somewhat jejune exercises. Lord Dufferin's, which I chanced to take up while putting together these essays, is one of the most practical and helpful with which I am acquainted. Nowhere is a more eloquent plea to be found for the study of Greek, and nowhere a more cogent plea, based on personal experience, for the study of it by the "new" method.

I have been much indebted for suggestions and corrections to my brother, Mr. A. M. Cook,

formerly Surmaster of St. Paul's School; but he must not be held responsible for my mistakes or opinions.

It is possible that the present volume may come into the hands of some readers who possess its predecessor. I take this opportunity, therefore, to supply a few footnotes or postscripts to the earlier essays. Some of the points have been given to me by friendly readers or helpful critics. Others occurred to me on chance reading, but too late for inclusion. Authors, like Thackeray's after-dinner speaker, have often to lament that a point only occurred to them—"when going away in the cab." My essay on "The Art of Biography" brought me many suggestions about the best biographies in the language. I think, however, that I mentioned most of the books which the general opinion would include in that category. In suggesting a very high place for the *Lives of the Norths*, however, I might have fortified myself with the opinion of another good judge besides Stevenson. Here is a passage from a letter by J. A. Symonds, printed in Mr. Horatio Brown's *Life* of him: "By the way, when you spoke of Pepys, I think you might have said a word about

Roger North. I regard his Lives of the Norths and his own Autobiography as remarkable essays in the composition of Memoirs. Jowett used to tell us twenty years ago that, next to Boswell, Roger North was the best biographer in English. Exaggerated, certainly, but the man has some right to a niche."

The mention of Stevenson reminds me that in the essay on "Literature and Modern Journalism" I might have added him to my list of Victorian writers who had lampooned the journals to which they used to contribute. "He had set himself," writes Stevenson of a college friend, "to found the strangest thing in our society—one of those periodical sheets from which men suppose themselves to learn opinions; in which young gentlemen from the universities are encouraged, at so much a line, to garble facts, insult foreign nations and calumniate private individuals; and which are now the source of glory, so that if a man's name be often enough printed there, he becomes a kind of demigod."

In "A Study in Superlatives" I raised the question, Which is the worst line in poetry? and gave Professor Tyrrell's selection of a line in Statius. A friendly reader sent me as a rival a line from Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*. The

Roman father, before plunging the dagger into Virginia, apostrophises her thus :

> And now, mine own dear little girl, there is no way but this.

It would not be easy to beat this as an example of comic bathos. I note that Mr. Drinkwater, in the able introductions contributed to the last volume of Mr. Humphry Ward's selections from *The English Poets*, has chanced to engage in this amusing game. Horne's *Orion* "would be a fruitful ground," he says, "for the anthologist of the flattest lines in poetry," and he gives us this example :

> His friends Orion left
> His further preparations to complete.

Another line which may be entered for the competition is quoted by Mr. Drinkwater from Alexander Smith :

> My heart is in the grave with her,
> The family went abroad.

Other of Mr. Ward's contributors are candid friends of the poets whom they introduce, and Mr. Bailey calls our attention to this "abomination of hideousness" in Meredith :

> Love meet they who do not shove
> Cravings in the van of Love.

But as for the flattest lines in English poetry,

searchers generally turn to Wordsworth, and fasten on lines such as this from "The Thorn":

> And to the left three yards beyond;

or this from "Simon Lee":

> For still, the more he works, the more
> Do his weak ankles swell;

or these from "The Sailor's Mother":

> And I have been as far as Hull to see
> What clothes he might have left or other property;[1]

or this from the piece addressed "To the Spade of a Friend":

> Spade! with which Wilkinson hath tilled his land.

Such exercises, however, are unprofitable, for the removal of the context is unfair to Wordsworth. But Wilkinson has been a stone of stumbling even to genuine admirers of the poet. It will be remembered that Tennyson and FitzGerald once engaged in a competition to make "the weakest Wordsworthian line imaginable," and the line to which they gave the palm was this:

> A Mr. Wilkinson, a clergyman.

---

[1] So the lines stood when first published. They were ultimately revised thus:

> And I have travelled weary miles to see
> If aught which he had owned might still remain for me.

The friends were so pleased with this exercise in the art of sinking that each claimed the authorship.

The mention of Wordsworth—the poet from whom it is easiest to select lines which might reasonably be held to be severally the worst and the best in English verse—reminds me to supply what I think is an interesting note about one of his recensions. In the chapter about "The Second Thoughts of Poets" I quoted the first and beautiful version of the penultimate stanza of "Laodamia":

> Ah, judge her gently who so deeply loved!
> Her, who in reason's spite, yet without crime,
> Was in a trance of passion thus removed;
> Delivered from the galling yoke of time
> And those frail elements—to gather flowers
> Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

"So wrote the Muse," I said, "holding the poet's pen; but the moralist afterwards took the passage in hand and sermonised it into this:

> Thus, all in vain exhorted and reproved,
> She perished; and, as for a wilful crime,
> By the just Gods whom no weak pity moved,
> Was doomed to wear out her appointed time
> Apart from happy Ghosts, that gather flowers
> Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers."

The moralist who spoiled the passage was Mrs. Wordsworth. This appears from an entertaining letter which Benjamin Robert Haydon sent to

Miss Mitford in 1824.[1] "When Wordsworth came back from his tour, I breakfasted with him in Oxford Street. He read 'Laodamia' to me, and very finely. He had altered, at the suggestion of his wife, Laodamia's fate (but I cannot refer to it at the moment), because she had shown such weakness as to wish her husband's stay. Mrs. Wordsworth held that Laodamia ought to be punished, and punished she was. I will refer to it. Here it is :

> She whom a trance of passion thus removed,
> As she departed, not without the crime
> Of lovers, who, in reason's spite have loved,
> Was doomed to wander in a joyless clime
> Apart from happy ghosts, that gather flowers
> Of blissful quiet in Elysian bowers.

I have it," continues Haydon, "in his own hand. This is different from the first edition. And as he repeated it with self-approbation of his own heroic feelings for banishing a wife because she felt a pang at her husband going to hell again, his own wife sat crouched by the fireplace and chanted every line to the echo, apparently congratulating herself at being above the mortal frailty of loving her William." Haydon's version in Wordsworth's own hand was, it will be seen,

[1] Haydon's *Correspondence and Table-Talk*, vol. ii. p. 88.

intermediate between that of the first and that of the last edition.

In the same chapter I fathered on Babbage a delightful emendation of two lines in Tennyson's "Vision of Sin," which I now restore to its rightful author. The emendation is to be found in Letter vii. of *The Competition Wallah*. It is attributed to "a friend who is passionately devoted to the study of the laws of sanitation and mortality. He carries his enthusiasm on the subject so far as to tinge with it his view of every conceivable matter — religious, political, and literary. He once wrote an anonymous letter to the Laureate, commenting on the lines in the *Vision of Sin* :

> Every moment dies a man,
> Every moment one is born.

He observed, with great truth, that if this statement were correct the population of the world would remain stationary, and urged the poet to alter the lines thus :

> Every moment dies a man,
> And one and one-sixteenth is born.

He owned that the exact figure was one, decimal point, ought, four, seven ; but (as he said) some allowance must be made for metre." I must hope that Sir George Trevelyan will forgive me for

having invested his *jeu d'esprit* with a mythical origin.

The chapter on "Words and the War" led many questioners to ask why I had not included this word or that. My paper made no pretence to be exhaustive. I was amusing myself with a little essay, not compiling a lexicon, and still less a slang dictionary. I included such words and phrases only as seemed to me of special interest or likely to pass into the language. In the latter connexion it may be worth recording that the word *camouflage* was "gazetted" on 19th December last, when the appointment was announced of Lt.-Col. Wyatt as "Controller of Camouflage." There are some words which I should certainly have included had they come into use, or had I noticed them, before my book went to press (May 1918). What an expressive word, for instance, is *cushy*! I first noticed it in a letter in *The Times* of Sept. 9, 1918, in which the writer spoke of "the fashionable lady war-workers of the illustrated Press and Cuthbert of the cushy job." The word presently received parliamentary recognition. The Secretary to the Board of Agriculture, in moving the second reading of the Land Settlement Bill (April 14, 1919), said that the first condition of success would be industry on

the part of the settlers. "If any soldier thought he was going to have what he called a cushy job, he would make a great mistake. The work of the small-holder would be hard; there would be no forty-eight hours' week for him." And here is another newspaper cutting which has the advantage of including another new and expressive word. The writer was recording various opinions about the new scale of pay for the Army of Occupation, and he said, "One infantryman's view was that it will be a cushy job in the army now, and an honest man will have more money for himself than if he came back to *civies*" (*Evening Standard*, Jan. 31, 1919). At the time when I discussed the question what the American soldier would be called, it looked as if *Sammy* would be the companion of our *Tommy*; but here is a cutting from the *Daily Mail* of June 28, 1918: "American soldiers have taken the matter in their own hands, and in their official journal, the *Stars and Stripes*, refer to themselves as *Yanks*, an abbreviation of Yankees. The Yank is, of course, a typical New Englander, but we observe from the *Stars and Stripes* that soldiers from all parts of the Union are agreeing to call themselves Yanks, and that appears to settle the matter."

In connexion with what I wrote about new words introduced by political discussions during the war, another phrase is worth recording because it was the subject of much dispute and is likely to figure in politico-military histories. When from time to time the foreign telegrams spoke of overtures for peace as likely to be made by Germany or Austria some of our ministers and many of the newspapers referred to such rumours as portending a new *peace offensive*. Pacifists and others in their turn took offence at the phrase, reading into it sundry implications of evil omen. Here is a passage in which the Foreign Secretary rebutted such suggestions and gave his definition of the phrase : "An hon. gentleman seemed to interpret the phrase as carrying with it by inference the suggestion that people who talked about peace offensives were people who intended to reject any propositions for peace, whatever those propositions might be. That is not what peace offensive means. The meaning of the expression is that propositions are made by one party who does not desire peace himself, but who does desire to divide his enemies by making proposals of peace" (House of Commons, May 16, 1918).

As peace came nearer a new and welcome word came into official language, and our controllers

began promising to *decontrol* this or that.[1] Some of us waited with such patience as we could command for the day when we should be "decensored" or "dedoraed" at large. I asked, by the way, "whether it was in the City or the Law Courts" that *Dora* was coined, and I am told that the credit for this happy piece of shorthand belongs to Lord Justice Scrutton.

Swift, writing in 1710, said that of late years he had been "very impatient for a peace, which I believe would save the lives of many brave words, as well as of men. The war has introduced abundance of polysyllables, which will never be able to live many more campaigns: speculations, operations, preliminaries, ambassadors, palisades, communications, circumvallation, battalions; as numerous as they are, if they attack us too frequently in our coffee-houses, we shall certainly put them to flight, and cut off the rear." But dams are seldom effectual against the stream of language, and Swift's long-winded enemies came to stay—though, to be sure, many had come before. The recent war has brought into common use some other polysyllables. It would

[1] As thus in a statement issued by Mr. Roberts, the Food Controller, on Feb. 13, 1919: "I am told that every one wants to get rid of Government control. I certainly want to myself if it will make things cheaper and not endanger supplies; and the moment I can see those conditions safeguarded in respect of any commodity, *decontrol* will come."

require Swift himself to pass due judgement on the odious words *evacuate*, *evacuation*, which have been used in many, and often most inappropriate, connexions in despatches from the Front. And here is another polysyllable on the use of which Sir Eric Geddes preened himself the other day, when introducing his omnivorous Bill :

> It is not a Railway Bill ; it is a transportation Bill. To show how little this country conceived the driving, vitalising spirit of transportation before the War, I would ask hon. Members to cast their minds back and to think what transportation meant. It had a flavour of a penal settlement abroad. We did not use the word. When I went to France to see Sir Douglas Haig about serving under him, he told me what he wanted me to do, and we tried to find a word to express it, and we agreed that "transportation" was the word. It was an American word, but we adopted it, and I believe that since then the word has gradually lost the American twang. We all use it now, although before the War it was never used in that sense (House of Commons, March 17, 1919).

Here, however, Sir Eric was not quite correct ; for on turning to the Dictionary I find that *transportation* in his sense was "much used in the 17th century down to about 1660," and that "afterwards it was gradually given up for *transport*, probably to avoid association with penal transportation."

In one sphere the peace will bring no respite to the coinage of new words or the introduction of new usages. The word *flight*, for instance, will have to drop one of its former senses. "Mr. Bonar Law's flights to Paris" convey no such suggestion as the "Flight to Varennes." And, meanwhile, the invention of new words or new usages in flying goes on continually, and it must add something to the interest of the art. It is amusing even to a sedentary civilian to try and plant new words or phrases in the language. In my earlier journalistic days my colleagues and I knew that Sir James Murray was a careful reader of the papers with which we were successively connected, and we used sometimes to coin new words for the fun of seeing whether they would be included in the *New English Dictionary*. But this is only a pale counterpart of the fun which must be derivable from the coinage of new words which are required by new feats of daring or invention, and which can perforce be added to the language. How quietly the new coinages are sometimes introduced! The *London Gazette* of January 1, 1919, contained a most interesting Despatch from General Trenchard, Commanding the Independent Royal Air Force. In the course of this he remarked that "*Ceiling* was of more

importance than speed for long-distance day bombing work," and from that day *ceiling* came into the language, without a word of explanation, to mean high flying, or rather, the power of ascending to great heights—as in this Report by the Air Ministry "On Airships for Commercial Purposes" (issued on Jan. 22, 1919): "The development of rigid airships has been even more rapid. . . . In 1918 the endurance has risen to . . . the maximum full speed to . . . The ceiling has correspondingly increased from 6000 ft. to 23,000 ft."

Sometimes the airman is more communicative and tells the outsider, not indeed the origin of his coinage, but at any rate what it means. Here, for instance, is a passage from a semi-official statement put out by the Air Ministry in January 1919:

> Some interesting details are now available concerning the small British airships whose remarkable share in safeguarding the shipping routes and destroying enemy submarines has been lately divulged in an official statement to the Press. The "Blimp," as it is popularly called, belongs to the type of airship termed the non-rigid, by which is meant that the envelope or gas-bag has no internal stiffening of any kind and retains its "streamline" shape solely by the pressure of the gas contained within. . . . There are two species of "Blimp," a single-engined ship which is officially

designated the SS. Zero, and a larger and newer two-engined class aptly styled the SS. Twin. So far as appearances go, the Blimp is scarcely a very formidable-looking craft. Most people who have seen one have been more amused than impressed. In consequence the magnitude of the Blimp's achievements seem all the more astonishing.

*Blimp* is an irresistible word, and it inspired some excellent verses in *Punch* (Jan. 29), from which I quote this stanza :

> Who gave it its title, and why ?
> Was it old Edward Lear from the grave ?
> Since Jumblies in Blimps would be certain to fly
> When for air they abandon the wave.
> Was it dear Lewis Carroll perhaps
> Sent his phantom to christen the barque,
> Since a Blimp is the obvious vessel for chaps
> When hunting a snark ?

Who gave it its title and why? I expect it is useless to ask. An airman would reply with such racy emphasis as might occur to him, "What else could it be called?" or, if he liked Lewis Carroll, "The Blimp is a boojum, you see." But what fun it must be! The Latin poet pictured himself as putting on his wings :

> No vulgar wing, nor weakly plied,
> Shall bear me through the liquid sky. . . .
> E'en now a rougher skin expands
> Along my legs ; above I change

To a white bird ; and o'er my hands
And shoulders grows a plumage strange ;
Fleeter than Icarus, see me float
O'er Bosporus, singing as I go.[1]

The young airmen of to-day coin words as they fly, and it will require much alertness in the dictionary-makers to keep pace with them.

E. T. C.

*May* 12, 1919.

[1] Horace, *Odes*, ii. 20 (Conington's translation).

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# I

## TRAVELLING COMPANIONS

*Je ne voyage sans livres, n'y en paix, n'y en guerre. C'est la meilleure munition j'aye trouvé à cet humain voyage.*—MONTAIGNE.

THE acid test of what is readable is to be found, I suppose, in prison. Certainly there is nothing like enforced seclusion from one's own library for discovering else unimaginable possibilities of reading printed matter. At an inn on a wet day one may find it possible to read the advertisements in a fashion paper, the list of names in a local directory, the Book of Leviticus, or the novels of ——. (The reader will kindly fill in the blank according to his own distaste.) I have read somewhere that Tennyson was once caught in such case, and became so much absorbed that he regretted having to leave before learning where the youngest of the girls in the story had been confirmed. Charles Lamb might have relented even towards "Scientific Treatises, Almanacs, and Statutes at Large" had he done six months in gaol with no other literary pabulum. On the

other hand, that there are books which have withstood even the prison test is known to all readers of Macaulay. In his essay on the *Memoirs of Burghley* by Dr. Nares, he tells of a criminal in Italy who was suffered to make choice between Guicciardini and the galleys. He chose the history. But the war of Pisa was too much for him. He changed his mind and went to the oar. About Guicciardini opinions differ. Mr. Symonds found in him "the pomp and dignity of Livy," combined with "something of the vivid force of Tacitus." Macaulay found him "certainly not the most amusing of writers," and "a Herodotus or a Froissart" only when compared with Dr. Nares. If Macaulay was unjust the wits presently avenged Guicciardini. An officer of good family had been committed for a fortnight to the House of Correction for knocking down a policeman. The authorities intercepted the prisoner's French novels, but allowed him to have the Bible and Macaulay's History. London gossip went on to say, Sir George Trevelyan tells us, that the gallant captain preferred picking oakum to reading about the Revolution of 1688.

At the other end of the scale, there is no test of real liking for a book so searching as the choice of travelling companions. When lists of their favourite books were published by various famous men, I used to wonder how often they had read the chosen books, and which of them would stand the

strain of carriage in a knapsack. Once, greatly daring, I asked Sir John Lubbock if he could lay his hand on his heart and say that he had verily read the whole hundred of his list. He said that he could, and on my wondering at his industry he added that he had found time for much reading while waiting for trains at his station. Scepticism vanished when I remembered where he lived. Even the Mahabharata might relieve the tedium of waiting on the South-Eastern and Chatham Railway. But it is one thing to choose the Mahabharata for your reading to-day when you can comfortably choose something else to-morrow; it is quite another thing to make choice of it for a sole companion. It is easy to say that one prefers Tennyson to Browning or *vice versa*; it is more difficult to be quite sure, in packing a small valise, that either volume will prove itself preferable to an extra pair of socks or shoes. The question has often been propounded what two books would best be selected for companions on a desert island. Obviously they must be full, various, humane, companionable. The regulation answer gives the Bible for first choice; and indeed, apart from other considerations, and in spite of *longueurs* and repetitions, the Bible, which is not so much a book as a literature, has incomparable claims. For second place the books which I have most often seen or heard suggested are Shakespeare, Plutarch, and Boswell. These have

one thing in common : each is so full and various as to seem to be not one, but all mankind's epitome.

The test, however, is only theoretical ; we are not likely to be packed off to a desert island with a couple of volumes. Napoleon, it is true, was banished to St. Helena, but no restriction was placed upon the number of his books, and he had fourteen hundred pounds' worth. But there are real occasions when the travelling test has strictly to be applied. For instance, men set out on distant expeditions with severely rationed allowance of baggage. So, when data were being collected in such sort, Sir Henry Stanley was asked what books he took with him on his earlier travels across the Dark Continent. The list of them may be read in its place.[1] Some of the books were included for purpose of instruction and research, but the greater number were chosen for sake of their companionableness. Stanley's taste in travelling companions was subject to continual sifting, for, as his carriers lessened in numbers, the books one by one were reluctantly thrown away, "until finally, when less than three hundred miles from the Atlantic, I possessed," he said, "only the Bible, Shakespeare, Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, Norie's *Navigation*, and the *Nautical Almanac*. Poor Shakespeare was afterwards burned by demand of

[1] *The Best Hundred Books*, a *Pall Mall Gazette* "Extra," 1886.

the foolish people of Zinga. At Boma Carlyle and Norie and the *Nautical Almanac* were pitched away, and I had only the old Bible left." "Many of the books," added Stanley, "are still in Africa, along the line of march, and will be kept as fetishes until some African antiquarian will pick some of them up a century hence, and wonder how on earth *Jane Eyre*, printed in 1870, came to be in Iturn, or Thackeray's *Esmond*, Dickens and Scott to be preserved among the lubari of Gambaragara."

*Habent sua fata libelli*, and their fortunes sometimes affect those of others than their first possessors. One day an African missionary left behind him, or threw away in order to lighten his load, a copy of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. Some years later a young Scots mechanic was sent out to serve as foreman-engineer on a steamer upon the Niger. He picked up the book, devoured it, and it was this treasure-trove, as he has often been heard to tell, that gave to the Right Hon. John Burns his interest in economics. Who picked up, I wonder, the pamphlets which Napoleon used to throw out of his carriage window when he had done with them, as he tore along to join his armies?[1]

At a later date I asked Stanley what books he had taken on the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition. He had forgotten some of the titles, as there

[1] See below, p. 129.

were two loads of books weighing in all 120 lbs. "We had many readers," he said, "on this last journey, and I selected many volumes from a desire to consult their interests. Those which gave greatest satisfaction to the majority, and were in almost daily use, were :

A pocket Bible.
Shakespeare.
Tennyson.
Allibone's *Cyclopaedia of Prose and Poetry* (a perfect treasure of selections).
*Sartor Resartus* (a book rich in earnest thoughts).
Bates' *Naturalist on the Amazon.*
Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, and
*Whitaker's Almanac*—as a memoranda book. It served as a link between us and civilization."

"Besides these," continued Stanley, "we had astronomical books, Norie, *Nautical Almanac*, tables for heights, books of travel in tropical countries, and a respectable assortment of novels. Walter Scott's were read three times over. I am almost sure they kept some of us from unhealthy brooding and melancholia. Think of Nelson in the Starvation Camp twenty-five days! Nelson and Parke in the Manyuema Camp four-and-a-half months! Stair, Nelson, and Parke six months at Fort Bodo! A dismal forest round about them—wretchedness clinging to their eyes by day and troubling their dreams by night—nerves relaxed through suffering—muscles loosened by famine—

thoughts straying towards deathly things. I must admit that books kept me from caring overmuch what I ate, or how much work was to be done. They assisted me to enjoy my surroundings, and were constant monitors, refreshing my inner life. And I fancy all my companions of the march would say the same. In the following lines from Shakespeare, a little changed, you will find the logic of the above :—

> All places that the eye of heaven visits
> Are to him with books ports and happy havens.
> Teach thy necessity to reason thus ;
> There is no virtue like necessity.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> For gnarling sorrow hath less power to bite
> The man that mocks at it and sets it light.

As our carriers sickened and died our books one by one were left behind."

It will have been noticed that Carlyle was last to be discarded on Stanley's earlier expedition, and that he was taken again on the later. In the flesh he may have been "gey ill to live with," but that some at least of his books are good to travel with in times of stress and strain is confirmed by recent experience. Mr. George Macaulay Trevelyan, in a paper written from the battle front in Italy, divides his literary companions into two classes. One consists of writers whom "we seek out as distractions to make us forget the terrible present, and as such they are then thrice welcome;

the greatest of these is Shakespeare." The other class is of "those who seem to speak to the times. Some old authors when we read them seem to stand at our side, urging us to hold on and do our duty. Among these," says Mr. Trevelyan, "are Milton and Meredith, but most of all Carlyle. Whatever the subject — Sartor, the Diamond Necklace, the essay on Scott or Johnson —it is all the same. The man speaks through his theme, however apparently remote to the war; he seems to understand these our times of grim necessity and primitive trial of the utmost qualities of men and nations. When you read Carlyle you feel you will never give in."[1] It is said sometimes that Carlyle's day is over, and I read a dismissal of him recently as "a Prussian parasite," whose "style so often resembles coal arriving next door."[2] Mr. Trevelyan's splendid tribute may be set off against such impatient judgement.

Another writer, who served under Sir Ian Hamilton and afterwards under General Allenby, has told us what books were his best companions on service. "Thucydides," he says, "kept me going through many weeks of the Dardanelles campaign, amazed at the modernity of his outlook and the extraordinary political insight of his set speeches." "The gallant pages of Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico* were also peculiarly welcome." Of the poets,

[1] "The Two Carlyles," in *The Cornhill Magazine*, June 1918.

[2] See an article in the *Morning Post* of 21st October 1918.

"Shakespeare was the most steadfast comrade, and is undoubtedly my choice for a desert island."[1]

It will be very interesting some day to learn from other witnesses what authors were the best comrades in the Great War. Who, I wonder, was found the most companionable poet by the fighting men of to-day? In the Victorian wars it was Tennyson. He used proudly to remember, we are told, that he had often been taken into battle, and that a soldier wrote, "I escaped with my life and my Tennyson." During the Peninsular campaign Scott was a ruling poet, and he took special pride, Lockhart tells us, in relating an incident of the lines of Torres Vedras. On the day when the *Lady of the Lake* reached Sir Adam Ferguson, he was posted with his company of the 101st Regiment on a point of ground exposed to the enemy's artillery. The men were ordered to lie prostrate on the ground; and the Captain, kneeling at their head, read aloud the description of the battle in canto vi. The listening soldiers only interrupted him by a joyous huzza whenever the French shot struck the bank close above them. I remember hearing an officer who had been through the South African War say that there was nothing like a campaign for reading, and that the best time for it was a battle. A book relieved the

[1] "Books on Service: A Thanksgiving," a charming paper by Orlo Williams in *The New Statesman*, March 22, 1919.

tedium of lying on your stomach and occasionally firing. He had thus read the whole of Gibbon and of Milton — the latter borrowed from a Dutch farm-house. And when Mr. George Wyndham went to South Africa, Virgil, Mr. Whibley tells us, was in his haversack.[1] Trench warfare in Flanders must have left much leisure for reading—though a time came when, as the editor of the *B.E.F. Times* wrote in explaining why the paper had to cease, "war nowadays seems to take up so much more of one's day than formerly."

Some of the great captains have been great readers. In Napoleon's last phase books were his only solace, but even to Waterloo he was accompanied by a travelling library of 800 volumes in six cases — including the Bible, Homer, Ossian, Bossuet, and all the seventy volumes of Voltaire.[2] Lord Wolseley, on the other hand, said that "a General has but very little time for reading—at least I never can find time when in the field. During the Mutiny and China War I carried a Testament and two volumes of Shakespeare that contained the best plays. Since

[1] Introduction to Wyndham's *Essays in Romantic Literature*, p. vii.

[2] This last item appears again in the travelling library of a famous civilian. Macaulay on the voyage to India read, among the classics, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, Virgil, Horace, and Caesar's *Commentaries*. His habitual voracity must have been sharpened by the sea air, for he read also "insatiably," as he says, "Bacon's *De Augmentis*, Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, Tasso, *Don Quixote*, Gibbon, Mill's *India*, all the seventy volumes of Voltaire, Sismondi's *History of France*, and the seven thick folios of the *Biographia Britannica*."

then, when in the field, I have always carried a Book of Common Prayer and Thomas à Kempis. When I am going on any distant expedition for a lengthened time I should add, for history, Creasy's *Decisive Battles*, Plutarch's *Lives*, Voltaire's *Charles XII.*, Froude's *Caesar*, and Hume's *England*; and for fiction," he wickedly added, "Macaulay's *England* and *Essays*."

What are the favourite books as companions on less distant and on peaceful travels? Among the mountains books perhaps ought not to be wanted. "The amusements characteristic of the genuine mountaineer" are, according to Rousseau and Sir Leslie Stephen, quite other than reading. "One is gazing for hours over a parapet at the foam-spotted waters of a torrent, and listening to the cry of the ravens and birds of prey that wheel from rock to rock a hundred fathoms beneath him." The other "consists in rolling big stones down a cliff to dash themselves to pieces at its foot. No one who cannot contentedly spend hours in that fascinating, though simple, sport really loves a mountain. The charms of this sport," adds Stephen, "are as unspeakable as they are difficult of analysis." Ruskin, who indulged in it on occasion, gives a reason for his enjoyment. "I spent an hour pleasantly enough," he says in one of his letters from Switzerland, "throwing stones with Couttet at the great icicles in the ravine. It had all the

delight of being allowed to throw stones in the vastest glass and china shop that ever was *established*, and was very typical to my mind of my work in general." His work in particular at the time was throwing stones at the established and orthodox political economy.

But he who plays a game with a purpose—even if it be only figurative as in this case—can hardly be counted as playing at all. Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff and a friend with him in the Bavarian Alps were more single-hearted at it. He and W. R. Greg "spent a happy day in throwing stones into a stream." Talking of this to Manning, Greg asked him if he ever did anything of the kind. "Never," replied Manning, adding that he had never been conscious of the slightest desire to do it. "Ah," rejoined Greg, "then there is no more hope for you; the child has quite gone out of your life, and of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Many travellers, however, who are genuine mountain-lovers, yet like also to have a book or two as companions for a wet day or a lazy stroll. If the choice be for prose, who shall decide between Montaigne's Essays and Bacon's? There are nicely pocketable editions of both. In Florio's *Montaigne* one has a book which Shakespeare read. The poet's autograph in a copy of the first edition of Florio, once accounted among the treasures of the British Museum, is now held to be of very doubt-

ful authenticity; but that Shakespeare knew the book Gonzalo's description of his imaginary kingdom is enough to show: it is clearly taken, sometimes almost word for word, from Florio's translation of a passage in the Essay "Of the Caniballes." And when, says Mr. Justin Huntly M'Carthy, "the illustrious and immortal Chicot set off on that delicate enterprise to Henry of Navarre concerning 'Turennius' and 'Margota,' he took with him as his travelling companion a book then but newly published, the *Essays* of his acquaintance, the Sieur de Montaigne.[1] The example of Chicot is one we might all do well to follow on our small human voyages, and even on the great human voyage itself." "Emerson tells us that in the cemetery of Père La Chaise there is the tomb of Auguste Collignon, who, according to the inscription on his monument, lived to do right, and had formed himself to virtue on the *Essays* of Montaigne." Does any one want support for preferring Bacon? Well, of the *Essays* Tennyson said, "There is more wisdom compressed into that small volume than into any other book of the same size that I know." More wisdom, but with some dross. "I know not how, but martial men are given to Love. I think it is, but as they are given to wine, for perils commonly ask to be paid in pleasures." Tennyson

[1] See Dumas, *Les Quarante-cinq*, vol. ii. ch. 3; ch. 35 in the English translation.

used to quote that passage as enough of itself to settle the Bacon-Shakespeare question. How could a man with such an idea of love write *Romeo and Juliet*?

If the choice be for poetry, the selection is difficult indeed. Lord Morley's favourite travelling companion in this sort appears to have been Matthew Arnold. "One of the slender volumes of his verse has made," we are told, "a cherished companion of mine on many a journey. The book of selection takes little compass, and in it anybody who is for a short interval a traveller away from the world's rough business may well find beauty to refresh, wisdom to quiet, associations to remind and collect. As it happens, I find written on the fly-leaf of this small treasure some words I had inscribed at what was to prove a memorable date: 'Read with much fortifying quietude of mind on the glorious forenoon of our departure, on the matchless terrace at Beatenberg, June 12, 1914.'" I have travelled with the same little book, but it is too much in one key, and in a minor key, to be an ideal companion. I expect that most people have preferred the greater variety to be found in Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, which has probably seen more cities and fields and hills in the pockets of more sorts and conditions of men than any other book of the kind. The common objection made to the book is that there is too much Wordsworth in it, and certainly the inclusion of forty-one pieces

of Wordsworth, as compared with thirty-two of Shakespeare and twenty-two of Shelley, was a liberal allowance, but Wordsworthians and anti-Wordsworthians alike may agree that he of all poets is fit companion in

> The silence that is in the starry sky,
> The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

But why did not Mr. Palgrave include those lines of Shakespeare which must come into the mind of every traveller?

> Full many a glorious morning have I seen
> Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
> Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
> Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy.

A more serious fault in *The Golden Treasury* than any over-representation of Wordsworth is the total exclusion of William Blake. I am glad to find on turning to my old copy that even in my school days I had the sense to add some of Blake's exquisite lyrics in the blank page at the end of the book. And, by the way, anybody who has the courage to present to others a selection of "the best poems" in the English or any other language ought also to have the grace to bind up some blank pages for his readers to fill at their pleasure. I will make one other grumble at Mr. Palgrave's selection, because it involves an interesting point. In the early editions of the *Golden Treasury* there is

given among the seventeenth-century poems a piece beginning—

> It is not Beauty I demand,
> A crystal brow, the moon's despair,
> Nor the snow's daughter, a white hand,
> Nor mermaid's yellow pride of hair:
>
> Tell me not of your starry eyes,
> Your lips that seem on roses fed,
> Your breasts, where Cupid tumbling lies,
> Nor sleeps for kissing of his bed:—

and so forth. It is a fine piece, and was copied into various other anthologies, being still given as an anonymous poem of the seventeenth century. Archbishop Trench included it in his excellent *Household Book of English Poetry*, and Dr. Holden in his *Foliorum Silvula*, in which latter collection I first made its acquaintance as a piece to turn into Latin verse. At some later date it was pointed out that the poem was in fact written by George Darley, who died in 1846, and Mr. Palgrave in his later editions withdrew it. This, I must think, was not to play fair. If the poem was one of "the best lyrics" in the English language, when it was supposed to be Elizabethan or a little later, why did it lose poetical merit because it was in fact early Victorian? I ask the question, but am aware that Victorians can expect no indulgence in these days. But it were ungracious to quarrel with so good a friend as the *Golden Treasury*, though the best of travelling companions may fall out by the way.

It adds something to the interest of that little book to know that it was itself planned during a holiday tour which Palgrave made with Tennyson, Holman Hunt, Val Prinsep, and Woolner. "While walking together," says Palgrave's daughter, "the friends talked so fast and so eagerly that they sometimes found it necessary to make a rule that each one, when particularly desirous of being heard, should enforce silence on the others by prefacing his words with an uplifted hand." One of the party adds some further touches to the picture. "The judgments on the verses offering themselves for consideration were finally resolved upon," says Holman Hunt, "after dinner, when pipes and a pint of port ripened the humour of the company." During the day the poet played truant. "We could watch Tennyson," adds Hunt, "in his slouch hat, his rusty black suit, and his clinging coat, wandering away among the rocks, assiduously attended by our literary friend, and if by chance the poet escaped his eyes for a minute, the voice of Palgrave was heard above the sea and the wind calling 'Tennyson, Tennyson,' while he darted about here and there till he again held the arm of the errant comrade."

The books which dealers catalogue as "Alpine" cannot be recommended very confidently as travelling companions. They are amusing enough to collect, but many are dreary to read. J. R. Green, the historian, dismissed them in a series of mordant

questions: "What is it which makes men in Alpine travel-books write as men never write elsewhere? What is the origin of a style unique in literature, which misses both the sublime and the ridiculous, and constantly hops from tall-talk to a mirth feeble and inane? Why is it that the senior tutor, who is so hard on a bit of bad Latin, plunges at the sight of an Alp into English inconceivable, hideous? Why does page after page look as if it had been dredged with French words through a pepper-castor? Why is the sunrise or the scenery always 'indescribable,' while the appetite of the guides lends itself to such reiterated description?" This for our wisest. As for *Paterfamilias' Diary of Everybody's Tour* (published anonymously, but not disowned, I believe, by Mr. Martin Tupper), and other books of the sort, in which grumbles and prejudices abound, they remind me of an epigram which Samuel Butler says he found in the visitors' book at Varallo. A traveller who signed his name "Tom Taylor"—doubtless not the well-known art critic and dramatic writer—added the word "disgusted" both at Orta and at Varallo. Whether the words were aimed at the Sacro Monte or at the inn did not appear, but in either case the epigram was well deserved:

> Oh wretched Tom Taylor, disgusted at Orta,
> At Varallo we find him disgusted again;
> The feeling's contagious, I really have caught a
> Disgust for Tom Taylor—he travels in vain.

The two Alpine books which can most confidently be recommended as travelling companions are Leslie Stephen's *Playground of Europe* and King's *Italian Valleys of the Pennine Alps*; and of the two I prefer, but perhaps only for private associations, the latter and the less known. *The Playground of Europe* has by Lord Morley been praised literally to heaven. "They have a ray divine," he says of three or four pieces in the book. I should not myself associate the idea of divinity with anything written by Stephen, but his book about the Alps is most readable. It may be worth noting, as a point of literary craftmanship, that both of the books I have named win half the battle by an admirable beginning, admirable both as arresting the reader's attention at the start and as giving a taste of the quality that is to follow. Stephen begins with a story of "a highly intelligent Swiss guide who once gazed with me upon the dreary expanse of chimney-pots through which the South-Western Railway escapes from this dingy metropolis. Fancying that I rightly interpreted his looks as symptomatic of the proverbial homesickness of mountaineers, I remarked with an appropriate sigh, 'That is not so fine a view as we have seen together from the top of Mont Blanc.' 'Ah, sir,' was his pathetic reply, 'it is far finer.' This frank avowal set me thinking." An excellent and a characteristic story, aptly introducing those questions of the history and *rationale* of love of moun-

tain scenery, which are the recurring themes of the book. Mr. King, who is to take us on "A Tour through all the romantic and less frequented Vals of Northern Piedmont from the Tarentaise to the Gries," begins with a familiar scene which is admirably described, though the grammar, like the traveller, falters a little :

> There are few incidents in Alpine travel which excite more strangely mingled sensations than the first sight of the lonely Hospice of the Great St. Bernard, in its winter robe of snow and mist, coming unexpectedly on the benighted traveller, who has toiled on foot up the long and weary ascent of the Val d'Entremont from Orsières. Overtaken on the last, and most trying part of the pass, by the rapidly deepening shades of an early winter evening—barely able in dim twilight to distinguish, at a few yards, the tall poles, the only guides to the direction of the deeply-buried track—enveloped in bewildering cloud-mist and whistling sleet, which sweep down on the icy wind from unseen mountain-tops ; plunging knee-deep in the thick snow, or stumbling in the dark over protruding rocks and down invisible hollows ; benumbed and drowsy, the only wish is to sit down anywhere, but for one moment, regardless of consequences, when suddenly the outline of the Convent looms out at a few yards' distance, like a huge ark indistinctly seen through the drifting clouds—

and so forth. The travellers enter, are hospitably entertained with warm soup and good Aostan wine. The Chanoine joins them. They explain their purpose to "explore and traverse, from head

to foot, all the remote and less frequented valleys of Piedmont, which descend from the steep southern face of the great Pennine chain, from Mont Blanc west to Monte Rosa east"—a district "abounding in every element of natural interest—from the snow-peaks, glaciers, and wild ranges, the last haunts of the all but extinct bouquetin, or ibex, to the rich valleys, with their strangely mixed races of Savoyard, Piedmontese, Italian, and German, as strongly contrasted as the wonderful gradations of their vegetation." The Chanoine is interested in travellers so prepared to be interested themselves; a flask of the best Malvoisie is produced from the convent cellars, books and maps from the library are spread out, and thus the tour is introduced. The book is illustrated with engravings from sketches by the author, in which, it must be confessed, the effect is sometimes unduly heightened; and a description is given, as of an ascent of the Grivola from Cogne, of what was, I believe, a less formidable expedition. But this is a venial blemish. Mr. King has so many interests, and so lively a curiosity, he is master of so many contriving ways, and knows so well the details which amuse, that he is always a pleasant travelling companion. By lapse of time the book has to-day a certain historical interest for frequenters of the region it describes. We learn what the Maison Delapierre was like before Gressoney St. Jean was visited by Queen Margherita and Robert Browning and

Lord Leighton, and are introduced to the "Royal" at Courmayeur—now the Capua of tourists in those parts—in days when the Bertolini family had not yet risen to be lords of Palace hotels in many an Italian city. I have taken King's *Italian Valleys* with me on many a visit to this enchanting region, and can truthfully say that we never grudged its room in valise or weight in satchel. Not that it is a very light book, neither. The physical heaviness of another favourite book of mine, namely, Samuel Butler's *Alps and Sanctuaries*, is the only reason why it was not named as a travelling companion along with Stephen and King, but this handicap has been reduced in the latest edition. A fourth favourite, Mr. Frederic Harrison's *My Alpine Jubilee*, is excluded for a different reason. To make a good travelling companion, a book must not only be readable and portable, but it must also within its range be a full book. This was the principle by which Dr. Johnson explained his possession of the copy of Cocker's Arithmetic which he gave to a Highland lassie in the Hebrides. "But, sir," asked Boswell, "is it not somewhat singular that you should happen to have Cocker about you on your journey?" "Why, sir," replied Johnson, "if you are to have but one book with you on a journey, let it be a book of science. When you have read through a book of entertainment, you know it, and it can do no more for you; but a book of science is inexhaustible." Mr.

Harrison's collection of letters from Switzerland is too slight to be worth carriage, but its zest is delicious. I know nothing better for whetting an appetite for travel.

That books should be portable if they are meant to be popular is a maxim which English publishers were slow to learn. They had been told it by Dr. Johnson, who used to say that "no man reads long together with a folio on his table. Books," said he, "that you may carry to the fire, and hold readily in your hand, are the most useful after all." Johnson's saying, which is true even of home reading, applies yet more forcibly to books intended for travelling companions. The pioneer who grasped this fact and made a fortune thereby was a German — Baron Christian von Tauchnitz—whose name is gratefully remembered by many generations of English travellers and residents abroad. His "Library of British Authors," now numbering many thousand volumes, was primarily intended to introduce British literature to foreign readers, and its principal sale was for some time in Germany. He used to say that the volumes which had easily distanced all others in sale were those containing Macaulay's History. But in the growth of English travel on the Continent and in the high price of English novels, Tauchnitz saw a further opportunity. At a time when a novel in England cost 31s. 6d., it could

be bought on the Continent in one, two, or three volumes of the Tauchnitz series at two francs a volume. For light reading on your travels you had no need to take thought before you started. Elderly and middle-aged readers will, I am sure, agree with me in counting among the pleasant memories of foreign travel, second only to the choice of a French novel at the first station kiosk, the visit on arrival at some foreign town to the bookshop which kept the largest selection of the latest Tauchnitz volumes. Nor was it only in fiction that you had a choice of bargains. At a time long before any cheap edition of Swinburne had been thought of at home, you could buy abroad an excellent volume of Selections (much better and fuller than Swinburne's own at 6s.) for a couple of francs. At the same cost you could buy abroad the Poems of Rossetti, when in England Messrs. Ellis & White were still charging I know not how many times more for the floral gilding and end-papers of the aesthetic school. And then—since a bit of the smuggler survives in the natural man — there was the pleasurable excitement of considering how far your conscience would be easy enough, and of wondering how far Her Majesty's Customs would be complaisant enough, to let you disregard the printed instruction "not to introduce any Tauchnitz volume into England." Instructions given to the Customs officers differed a good deal from

time to time, and even in strict times they were not always entirely adamant. A pretty girl was deep in *The Woman in White* when the packet was nearing Dover. The Customs officer said that she must give up the book. With glistening eyes she pleaded that she positively must be allowed to know how it all ended. The officer said that he had strict orders, but the Englishman's love of compromise came to the rescue of distress. He took the lightly stitched volume, tore off, as tribute to the law, the pages that had been read, and handed back the finale—a graceful concession to England, home, and beauty. These are now in large part memories of the past. Tauchnitz has no longer the same foreign vogue or monopoly. In these days of "Sevenpennies," "World Classics," and "Pocket Editions of the Best Authors," the choice of travelling companions need no longer be conditioned by the selection of a German publisher; but for the combination of pleasant *format*, clear print, good paper, and cheap price he has not often been beaten. I came across the other day a pleasing instance of the boon which was conferred upon a solitary traveller when Tennyson's works first became easily portable. "I often hear," wrote Lady Cardwell in 1878, "from Col. Gordon of his long solitary rides of hundreds of miles in the desert and wilderness, and wished to find the most acceptable companion I could send to him. It must be in a very small

compass." She found it in a pocket Tennyson. Gordon was delighted with it, and mentioned it in many letters. "In his last," said Lady Cardwell, "lately received from Khartoum, he says: 'I find the reading of Tennyson is my great relief, and the volumes are so small that they will always go with me.'"

Portability was a factor, though not the decisive one, in the long and fierce competition between Murray and Baedeker for popular favour as Travelling Handbooks. Murray was the pioneer, but I am afraid it must be owned that the first became the last in the race; and the more's the pity, for in most respects Murray's Handbooks are incomparably the better. Baedeker cribbed freely and sometimes comically. The original edition of Murray's *Switzerland* was written by John Murray the Third, who had some taste for geology. This had caused him to notice in one of the southern Swiss valleys that "the slate rocks here are full of red garnets." Baedeker mistranslated, and informed us that the said rocks "are overgrown with red pomegranates." Murray wrote for educated and leisurely travellers, Baedeker for hurried tourists; and as the number of the latter began to exceed that of the former, Baedeker found the larger market, and was able to bring out new editions with the latest information more frequently than Murray. Also Baedeker had the better maps, and he borrowed from

another German guide-book an excellent device. He arranged his Swiss volume so that it could be unbound and divided into separately sewn sections, each covering a different piece of the ground. Many walkers have blessed Baedeker for this aid to portability. Murray followed Baedeker's lead in some respects (though not in this), but followed too late, and in catering for the hurried tourist who wants full details about inns and the like had in some cases to curtail the special features of his earlier editions. These remain the best, and one at least of them—Richard Ford's *Handbook to Spain*—is almost a classic. Fortunately for collectors of such things, there is no run after early Murrays (except in the case of the original edition of Ford). Just not too late for use in a piece of work I was engaged upon at the time, I picked up for a few pence a Third Edition of Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy* (1847). On looking into it I found a series of notes contributed by Ruskin, which had been crowded out of the modern editions and had escaped the notice of previous bibliographers of my author.[1] Murray's foreign Handbooks are now, I suppose, books of the past, for it has been announced that the copyright of them has been acquired by Mr. Muirhead for the series of new guides, published by Messrs. Macmillan, which are to "incorporate the good

[1] The Notes were collected and reprinted in vol. xxxviii. of the Library Edition of Ruskin.

points of Murray," while beating Baedeker on his own ground. Let us hope that these Blue Guides will indeed combine the best points of the rival Reds.[1] The series has made a promising start with an excellent Handbook to London.

It is curious that the claims of portability were so long neglected by the publishers of Augustus Hare's series of "Walks"—books as often enjoyed by travellers as derided by critics. The very title ought to have suggested that the books should be pocketable, but it is only of recent years, and then only in the case of some of them, that they have become so. The worst offender in matter of heaviness is Signor Lanciani. His books about Ancient and Christian Rome are eminently readable and companionable, but the heavy paper and (as I think) superfluous photographic illustrations make them impossible as actual companions on rambles in Rome. For guide to the Remains of Ancient Rome, Professor Middleton's book is easily the best, but it is no longer up to the date of recent excavations. When I was last in Rome

[1] If any reader cares to follow this battle of the books into further detail, he will find copious, and not unentertaining, material in the following places: (1) *Pall Mall Gazette*, August 23, 1889, an interview with Karl Baedeker; (2) *Murray's Magazine*, Nov. 1889, an article by John Murray on "The Origin and History of Murray's Handbooks for Travellers"; (3) the exhaustive book by Mr. W. A. B. Coolidge on *Swiss Travel and Swiss Guide-Books*, also published in 1889. My remarks about Murray above are meant to apply only to the foreign Handbooks. Those to the English counties have retained their old excellence. Exception must also be made in the case of Murray's *Switzerland*, the latest editions of which were the best, being re-edited by Mr. Coolidge.

I found a little book by Mrs. Burton-Brown to be an instructive companion.

In these rambling remarks on companions for foreign travel I have left to the last the book which of all is the most indispensable. Bishop Stubbs made a teasing reference to it in a speech to some city magnates at a meeting of a High School. There was one book, he said, which he had ever at hand, night and day, the one book that a bishop must always have by him. "You know it well," he added; "it begins with B. It is Bradshaw." The Continental Bradshaw or some substitute for it is not only indispensable for actual travel, but is a fond companion alike in retrospect and in anticipation. How often—

> . . . in lonely rooms, and mid the din
> Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
> In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
> Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart.

The tours that one makes in his own room with a Bradshaw and a Murray at hand are sometimes the best of all, for in them the railway carriages are never crowded, the trains are never late, the inns are always glad to see you, the beds are always clean, and it never rains except at night.

Present and future travellers in classic lands may enjoy an easy companionship denied to their predecessors. Pocket editions of the classics there

were of old time—even waistcoat-pocket classics for those strong eyes that could do with Pickering's Diamond Classics; but scholarship grows rusty and dictionaries are heavy. The "Loeb Classical Library," of convenient *format*, and with the Greek or Latin text on the left-hand page and an English translation on the right, precisely meets the need of the unlearned traveller. Who will now ever go to Rome without a volume or two of the Loeb Latin Library? or to the isles of Greece without his Loeb *Odyssey*? Or to Sicily either, I ought perhaps to add in these days when Samuel Butler has so wide a vogue.[1]

Nor is it only the traveller in classic lands who will bless the Loeb Library. The call of the classics is strong upon those who make long voyages or live much in solitude. Undistracted by the carking care of trivial tasks, or seeking consolation in danger, or thrown back in solitude upon the riddle of existence, men turn to the ancient writings in which, as Professor Murray has finely said, "stridency and clamour are forgotten in the ancient stillness," and "the great things of the human spirit still shine like stars, pointing Man's

[1] I recall an afternoon when Butler, lately back from Sicily, had come to take tea with my wife in our house in Russell Square. A friend chanced to come in who knew not of "The Sicilian Origin of the *Odyssey*." Butler was describing the gracious hospitality he had received during his visit, and our friend said, "You are a very popular person, then, with the Sicilians?" Butler, who in his characteristic way was sitting upright on the edge of his chair, looked gravely over his spectacles and replied, "Yes, for have I not given them the *Odyssey*?"

way onward to the great triumph or the great tragedy, and even the little things, the beloved and tender and funny and familiar things, beckon across gulfs of death and change with a magic poignancy." [1]

> There's a sunset-touch,
> A fancy from a flower-bell, someone's death,
> A chorus-ending from Euripides,—
> And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears
> As old and new at once as nature's self.

It is not only men of letters who feel thus impelled to stretch hands across the gulf. Cecil Rhodes, for want of a Loeb Library, projected something of the sort for his own reading beneath Table Mountain. Stanley, on his expeditions to Equatorial Africa, took Homer and Herodotus and Horace. Mr. Roosevelt, on his sporting expedition to Africa, included Homer and Euripides in his Pigskin [2] Library. We will turn to another man of letters to explain the call of the classics which men of a different type have none the less felt. "On long voyages," says Froude, "I take Greeks as my best companions. . . . The days pass, and our ship flies fast upon her way :

> γλαυκὸν ὑπὲρ οἶδμα κυανόχροά τε κυμάτων
> ῥόθια πολιὰ θαλάσσας.

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[1] *Religio Grammatici*, p. 47.

[2] So called from the binding of the books chosen as companions of the chase. There was a list of the books in one of the daily papers, I think the *Pall Mall Gazette*, of Sept. 23, 1909.

How perfect the description! How exactly in those eight words Euripides draws the picture of the ocean; the long grey heaving swell, the darker steel-grey on the shadowed slope of the surface waves, and the foam on their breaking crests. Our thoughts flow back as we gaze to the times long ago, when the earth belonged to other races as it now belongs to us. The ocean is the same as it was. Their eyes saw it as we see it:

> Time writes no wrinkle on that azure brow.

Nor is the ocean alone the same. Human nature is still vexed with the same problems, mocked with the same hopes, wandering after the same illusions." And again the same writer says: "I had a few volumes of pocket classics which I always take with me in distant expeditions. Greek and Latin literature is wine which does not spoil by time. Such of it, in fact, as would spoil has been allowed to die, and only the best has been preserved. In the absence of outward distractions one can understand and enjoy these finished relics of the old world. They shine as fixed stars in the intellectual firmament—stars which never set." And Froude goes on to give, in this chapter of *Oceana*, words of ancient wisdom from Pindar, as in the corresponding chapter of *The English in the West Indies*, from Plato. "As a book for the occasion, as a spiritual bath after the squalor of Cape politics, I read Pindar, the purest of all the

Greek poets, of the same order with Phidias and Praxiteles, and as perfect an artist in words as they in marble. Hard he is, as the quartz rock in which the gold is embedded,[1] but when you can force your way into his meaning, it is like glowing fire. His delight is in the noble qualities which he can find in man."

"Of all reading," says Froude yet again, "the *Odyssey* is the most delightful at sea. I had tried to combine Homer and Shakespeare, reading them alternately. But they would not mix. The genius was different. Shakespeare interprets to us our own time and our own race. The *Odyssey* is a voice out of an era that is finished, and is linked to ours only by the identity of humanity. Man is the same at heart, and the sea is the same, and the fresh salt breeze breathes through its lines."

Edward FitzGerald made shorter voyages, but they brought the same call to the classics. "I scarce know why it is," he wrote to a friend, "that I always get back to Greek—(and Virgil)—when in my Ship ; but so it is. Sophocles has been a sort of Craze to me this summer. (N.B. Don't be frightened. No translation threatened! All that done with for ever.) And Herodotus has been delightful. . . . I remain the same inaccurate

[1] A curiously similar saying about Pindar is attributed to Tennyson. "He once said, He is a kind of Australian poet ; has long tracts of gravel, with immensely large nuggets imbedded" (F. T. Palgrave in the *Memoir of Tennyson*, vol. ii. p. 499).

Scholar ; often not knowing the meaning of a Word ; but contented if what I do make out, right or wrong, amuses or interests me." He found the old classics " inexhaustible."

On July 18, 1822, a dead body was washed up on the shore near Viareggio. " The tall slight figure," says Trelawny, " the jacket, the volume of Sophocles in one pocket, and Keats's poems in the other, doubled back, as if the reader, in the act of reading, had hastily thrust it away, were all too familiar to me to leave a doubt on my mind that this mutilated corpse was any other than Shelley's." The books were fit travelling companions on the last journey of the author of *Prometheus* and *Hellas*—the first, the works of one of the lofty grave tragedians who taught

> In chorus or iambic, teachers best
> Of moral prudence, with delight received
> In brief sententious precepts, while they treat
> Of fate, and chance, and change in human life,
> High actions and high passions best describing ;

the other, the works of the English poet who hoped that he had not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece and dulled its brightness, and who, by some natural affinity and instinctive sympathy, was often able to divine the spirit of Greek poetry. The waves had killed the man but spared the books. "Except the blind forces of Nature, nothing moves in this world," said Sir Henry Maine, " which is not Greek in its origin."

## II

## THE CLASSICS IN DAILY LIFE

"*I like to quote passages written by disinterested people, not living on the classics, which attest their admiration of Sophocles, Virgil, or Tacitus. I like to say of a passage in Virgil: 'This was quoted by Chatham, Pitt, or Peel,' as the case may be. . . . I do not wish to throw over the immortals of Greece and Rome, but to deck their images with fresh wreaths made in other gardens.*"—Hints for Eton Masters, *by W. J.*

An intelligent foreigner, if he came fresh to the debates of the mother of parliaments in the eighteenth and a large part of the nineteenth century, would be struck by the prevalence of quotations from the Greek and Latin classics. If he chanced upon some collections which have been made of such things,[1] he might well be puzzled. He would find, as some one has said, that Homer and Virgil were treated by the most renowned of British statesmen as if they had been living writers of political despatches, instead of

[1] See, for instance, a pleasant chapter in Mr. Herbert Paul's *Men and Letters*; a well-documented paper by Bishop Welldon in *The Nineteenth Century* of April 1905; and, above all, the collections made by Mr. Hugh Platt in his charming miscellanies entitled *Byways in the Classics* and *A Last Ramble in the Classics.*

poets whose languages are no longer spoken and who had been dead many hundreds of years. The author of *Ionica*, in making an attempt to give some account of English politics to a Japanese student, dealt with this point. "It must seem strange," he wrote, "to other races of men that a book written by a Greek some twenty-five centuries ago could affect the counsels of statesmen. But this can be understood when it is perceived that Europe is governed entirely by gentlemen, that gentlemen are imbued with literature, and that the literature which affects similarly, if not equally, the cultivated minds of all European nations is not written in the language now spoken by any of them, but in the earlier forms of language spoken in Italy and Greece."

"Classical quotation," said Dr. Johnson, "is the parole of literary men all over the world." It was until lately no less the common form with British statesmen in Parliament. Even the most un-literary of politicians had the knack of classical quotation. Never was there a less bookish statesman than Mr. Parnell, but one quotation at least from Virgil stands to his credit. It was made, however, not in the House of Commons, but in the enforced seclusion of Kilmainham. "Parnell's first greeting to me," says Mr. O'Brien, "as I entered the prison yard, was characteristic, and dispelled my dreams of a haven of rest. 'O'Brien

of all men in the world! You are the man we wanted,' he said; and with the chuckle with which he always passed off a quotation as if it were a successful joke, 'Deus nobis haec otia fecit.'[1] And he begged me during the dinner-hour to draft a No-Rent Manifesto."[2]

John Bright was not unliterary, but he was better read in English than in Latin or Greek. Indeed, he had unkind things to say of the classics. Yet even he once at least quoted Homer, though not in the original. The occasion was the public breakfast given to William Lloyd Garrison, the American abolitionist, in 1867, when Mr. Bright made what was thought by many of his friends to have been the highest achievement of his oratorical art. He was referring to the triumph of the anti-slavery cause and to the triumph over passion that succeeded it, and he led up to his point by quoting "the words of an ancient and renowned poet:

> Unholy is the voice
> Of loud thanksgiving over slaughtered men."[3]

Mr. Winston Churchill tells us that the only books which his father knew well were the Bible, Gibbon, and "Jorrocks"; but on one occasion at least he quoted Horace in the House with an

[1] 'Tis a god that made this holiday for us.
Virgil, *Ecl.* i. 6.

[2] *Recollections*, p. 362.

[3] *Odyssey*, xxii. 412. Bright quoted from Cowper's translation.

aptness that rivals the best instances of such things. He was defending an extension of the Irish franchise against which Mr. W. H. Smith had raised "the mud-cabin argument." "After all," he said, "the difference between the cabin of the Irish peasant and the cottage of the English agricultural labourer is not nearly so great as is the difference between the palaces which are the abode of the right hon. gentleman, the member for Westminster, and the modest dwelling which shelters from the storm and tempest the humble individual who is now addressing the Committee. I can truly say—

> Non ebur neque aureum
> Mea renidet in domo lacunar,
> Non trabes Hymettiae
> Premunt columnas ultima recisas
> Africa."[1]

Mr. Smith was a favourite butt of Lord Randolph's in those days, and this Horatian sally was much enjoyed. Then there is the case of Walpole, who said of himself that he had "totally neglected reading," but who had, nevertheless, the trick of neat quotation from Virgil and Horace. His memory, however, though prodigious, some-

[1] Carven ivory have I none;
No golden cornice in my dwelling shines;
Pillars choice of Libyan stone
Upbear no architrave from Attic mines.
(Conington.)

times played him false, and one day he quoted a familiar passage in Horace as

> Hic murus aeneus esto
> Nil conscire sibi, nulli pallescere culpae.[1]

"Pulteney replied," says Lord Morley, "that his Latin was as bad as his logic, and that the right words were *nulla pallescere culpa*." Walpole offered to bet him a guinea. The Clerk at the table gave it against the Minister, who threw the guinea down. Pulteney, catching it, held it up to the House, calling out, "'Tis the first money I've had from the Treasury these many years, and it will be the last." The guinea is now in the British Museum. Pulteney desired that it should be kept as an heirloom. "I told Walpole," he said, "that I could take the money without blush on my side, but I believed it was the only money he ever gave in the House of Commons where the giver and receiver ought not equally to blush. This guinea, I hope, will prove to my posterity the use of knowing Latin and encourage them in their learning." The guinea may serve also as a token of the way in which the classics were once tossed from side to side in the daily encounters of Parliament. How different is the atmosphere now! The other day Mr. Balfour ventured, not indeed

[1] Be this your wall of brass, your coat of mail:
A guileless heart, a cheek no crime turns pale.
*Ep.* i. 1. 61 (Conington's translation).

on a poetical quotation, but on the remark that two propositions made by some honourable member were not *in pari materia*, and he was at once interrupted by cries of "Translate."

It is customary to deplore the decay of classical quotation in our parliamentary debates. Lord Morley, in noting the disappearance of "a once admired parliamentary habit," says, truly enough, that it is "significant of a great many more important things than a casual change in literary taste"; but in Lord Morley the scholar meets the democrat, a little uneasily sometimes, and I think we may detect half a tear in the words in which he tells the passing of the old order: "Never again will either House hear a Minister declaim the solemn hexameters of Lucretius, among the noblest in all poetry; or the verses where Virgil describes the husbandman turning up with rake and plough the rusty javelins, empty helms, and mighty bones of a forgotten battlefield of long ago."[1] Lord Curzon, in whom the scholar and the aristocrat meet in natural harmony, does not disguise his grief at the decline

[1] Scilicet et tempus veniet, cum finibus illis
Agricola, incurvo terram molitus aratro,
Exesa inveniet scabra robigine pila,
Aut gravibus rastris galeas pulsabit inanes.
*Georg.* i. 493.

I do not know who quoted these lines in the House. For the lines from Lucretius, and Mr. Gladstone's quotation of them, see below, p. 50.

from the standard of oratorical deportment set by an earlier age. The great speakers of the past "were drawn," he says, "from a few families, frequently connected by ties of intermarriage. They had received the same public school and University education, deliberately framed to qualify them, not merely for participation in public life, but for proficiency in public speech. . . . They quoted their favourite authors, they capped each other's efforts, and, above all, they understood (*i.e.* the few who counted, understood) each other's quotations. When they went down to the House of Parliament a similar dignity characterised their dress and deportment. . . . There is too much reason to fear that quotation, except from an opponent's speeches, is a moribund accomplishment. And yet it is one of the most hallowed and effective implements of oratory."[1]

But before we can accept the former prevalence of this pleasant art and its present decay as evidence bearing on the influence of the classics, we must make some distinctions. "The study of the Classics," said Hazlitt, "teaches us to believe that there is something really great and excellent in the world surviving all the shocks of accident and fluctuations of opinion, and raises us above that low and servile fear which bows only to present power and upstart

[1] *Modern Parliamentary Eloquence*, pp. 8, 12.

authority. . . . We feel the presence of that power which gives immortality to human thoughts and actions, and catch the flame of enthusiasm from all nations and ages. It is hard to find in minds otherwise formed either a real love of excellence, or a belief that any excellence exists superior to their own. Everything is brought down to the vulgar level of their own ideas and pursuits." A classical quotation may connote a study of the classics in this sort. It may serve to illuminate a modern problem by an instance of ancient wisdom. It may hand on some flame of enthusiasm and inspire to lofty thought by relevant remembrance, such as the subject-matter of present moment will suggest to a well-stored mind. On the other hand, the habit of classical quotation may be merely a literary fashion, and be cultivated for rhetorical display.

On quotations from Virgil in parliamentary debate a long chapter might be written. Just as in the Middle Ages Virgil's words were twisted by every device of allegory and mistaken etymology in order to furnish authority for any occasion, so in our parliamentary debates it often seems that no speech of any pretension was deemed likely to pass muster without the inclusion of some Virgilian tag. Take, for instance, the passages from the second *Aeneid* about the Trojan horse with which Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Lowe bombarded each other during the debates on the

Reform Bill in 1866. As literary exercises the quotations were well enough, but they were of no other value, and the House may well have given a sigh of relief when Mr. Lowe at last promised to "turn the noble beast out to grass for the remainder of the session." This was after a fling at Mr. Gladstone, administered by a translation of a passage which Mr. Lowe thought "worthy the attention of the House, because it contains a description not only of the invading army of which we have heard so much, but also a slight sketch of its general :

> The fatal horse pours forth its human tide,
> Insulting Sinon flings his firebrands wide,
> The gates are burst, the ancient rampart falls,
> And swarming millions climb its crumbling walls." [1]

Let us be just to Mr. Lowe and remember that Mr. Gladstone began the round, and began it too with a somewhat trite oratorical mode. "Such is our bill," he had said on moving its introduction. "We cannot look, and we hope no man will look, upon it as upon some Trojan horse," etc. etc. The horse was dragged in, it will be seen, by way of stating what the bill was *not*. Obviously Mr. Lowe had to take up the challenge. But if

[1] Arduus armatos mediis in moenibus adstans
Fundit equus, victorque Sinon incendia miscet,
Insultans ; portis alii bipatentibus adsunt,
Millia quot magnis umquam venere Mycenis.
*Aen.* ii. 328.

one looks at the performance closely, how forced and futile it appears! Mr. Gladstone brings the horse on to the stage, hoping that none would compare the new voters "with some Trojan horse filled with armed men bent upon ruin, plunder, and conflagration," and so gets off his Virgilian quotation. The debate is adjourned till next day. Mr. Lowe goes home and takes down his *Aeneid*, and thus primed taunts Mr. Gladstone with not having given "the sequel" of his quotation. This was the fifth Reform Bill introduced since 1851, and so he is able to fire off the lines:

> Quater ipso in limine portae
> Substitit, atque utero sonitum quater arma dedere.
> Instamus tamen, immemores, caecique furore,
> Et monstrum infelix sacrata sistimus arce.[1]

Then the debate reaches a later stage, and Mr. Gladstone taunts Mr. Lowe with having taken the first quotation as "a bait" instead of as "a warning," and so further references to the horse come in. There is another adjournment, and Mr. Lowe has time to go to his Virgil again. He is unable to reason with Mr. Gladstone "for want of a common principle to start from, but there is happily one common ground left to us, and that is the second book of the *Aeneid*": enter the old

[1] *Aeneid*, ii. 242; thus translated by Bowen:

> Four times in the gate
> Halted the monster, and armour clanged four times from its gloom.
> Still to the work unthinking we hasten, blinded by fate,
> Plant in Pergama's temple the portent laden with doom.

horse once more. All this may have been in accordance with the correct rules of parliamentary deportment, but surely it was a mere piece of literary affectation. If it was thought to be anything more, it may almost be classed with the strange and childish use which was made of Virgil's words and name in the Middle Ages.

But during the debates on the Reform Bill of 1866 Mr. Gladstone seems to have been quite unable to get on without the *Aeneid*. In his famous speech before the second reading he referred to his change of sides, and to the generous indulgence with which he had been received by the Liberal party. "You received me," he said, "as Dido received the shipwrecked Aeneas," and putting into their mouths the words of the queen, he trusted that they would never have occasion to think themselves mad for doing so:

Ejectum littore, egentem
Excepi, et regni demens in parte locavi.[1]

And again in the peroration of the same speech—which good judges have placed among the finest of his efforts—the passage about "the great social forces" which "move onwards in their might and majesty" was prefaced by Dido's imprecation:

Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor.[2]

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[1] I took him in, a stranded outcast, bare:
Yea in my very throne and land, ah fool! I gave him share.
*Aen.* iv. 373 (W. Morris).

[2] Mayst thou arise, some Avenger, from our dead bones.
*Ib.* iv. 625.

This was a fine application of a famous line, but it can hardly be called more than a rhetorical ornament.

For every occasion Mr. Gladstone had a Virgilian tag, sometimes more and sometimes less relevant. There was a famous debate in July 1864, when he had the difficult task of defending the Government's policy of non-intervention in the spoliation of Denmark by Prussia. Mr. Disraeli had moved a vote of censure. But what, asked Mr. Gladstone, was the right hon. gentleman's alternative policy? It was that he and Lord Malmesbury should come into office, whereupon, he seemed to think, "all public offenders against the peace of Europe will be affrighted as were the Greeks of old by the appearance of Aeneas in the shades below :

> At Danaum proceres, Agamemnoniaeque phalanges,
> Ut videre virum fulgentiaque arma per umbras,
> Ingenti trepidare metu."[1]

At best the quotation was no more than the literary embellishment of a piece of persiflage. To those who were hot on behalf of the Danes, it seemed a piece of unworthy trifling. "What true words are worth any man's utterance," wrote Ruskin to the papers next day, "while it is possible for such

[1] But when the lords of Danaan folk, and Agamemnon's hosts,
Behold the man and gleaming arms amid the dusky ghosts,
They fall a-quaking full of fear.
*Aen.* vi. 489 (W. Morris's translation).

debates to be, and two English gentlemen can stand up before the English Commons to quote Virgil at each other, and round sentences, and show their fineness of wrist in their pretty little venomous carte and tierce of personality, while, even as they speak, the everlasting silence is wrapping the brave massacred Danes? I do not know, never shall know, how this is possible. . . . Mr. Gladstone must go to places, it seems, before he can feel. Let him go to Alsen, as he went to Naples, and quote Virgil to the Prussian army." And so forth, and so forth. But though Disraeli was in fact no more inclined than Mr. Gladstone to take the field against Prussia, Ruskin need not have included Mr. Disraeli in the sneer about Virgil. Mr. Gladstone on this occasion had the *Aeneid* to himself, and Mr. Disraeli very seldom quoted the classics in Parliament. He contented himself with laughing at Peel, whose life, he said, was one great appropriation clause, for borrowing his Latin quotations from earlier parliamentary speakers. Not that Mr. Disraeli was careless of the ancient classics. It was Aristotle, he said, "who has taught us most of the wise things we know"; his novels show that he had a great admiration for the "immortal voice" of Plato; and in public orations he quoted Sophocles.

The quotation from Virgil last mentioned was the subject of an earlier parliamentary incident,

and Mr. Gladstone may very probably have had it in mind. It is related of the elder Pitt that after one of his speeches he proceeded to leave the House, but as the doorkeeper was opening the door for him the Minister caught the words of a member announcing that he "rose to reply to the right hon. gentleman." Pitt in his masterful way gave the honourable member a freezing look, and as he hobbled back to his place was heard to murmur to himself the line :

At Danaum proceres, etc.

He took his seat and said, "Now let me hear what the hon. gentleman has to say to me." "Did any one laugh ?" was asked of a member who described the scene. "No," was the reply, "we were too much awed." [1]

Of quotations which may be called literary tags there was another instance in Mr. Gladstone's speech in the House of Commons on March 20, 1873. He had been defeated on the Irish University Bill, but Mr. Disraeli manœuvred him back to office, counting on the continuance of a range of extinct volcanoes to swell the ultimate triumph of their opponents. Mr. Gladstone was aware of the danger, and defended his course only as the lesser of two evils. "I do not think," he said, "that as a general rule the experience we have had in former years of what may be called returning or

[1] *Life of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, by Basil Williams, i. 273.

resuming governments has been very fortunate. It reminds me of that which was described by the Roman general according to the noble ode of Horace :

> Neque amissos colores
> Lana refert medicata fuco,
> Nec vera virtus, cum semel excidit,
> Curat reponi deterioribus."

Lord Morley in recording the speech gives Mr. Gladstone's own translation of the lines :

> Can wool repair
> The colours that it lost when soaked with dye ?
> Ah no ! True merit once resigned,
> No trick nor feint can serve as well.

Even when so translated, the relevance of the passage was a little two-edged, and the scholarly conscience of the biographer compelled him to add in a note that "A rendering less apt for the occasion finds favour with some scholars, that true virtue can never be restored to those who have once fallen away from it." This is Conington's reading of the passage, for he translates :

> The hues of old
> Revisit not the wool we steep ;
> And genuine worth, expell'd by fear,
> Returns not to the worthless slave.

It is curious to note, by the way, how various are the applications which different men find for the same passage of some well-remembered classic. Mr. Gladstone, as we have seen, applied the lines

of the great ode about Regulus to the case of a Government which reprieved itself from defeat. Ruskin applied the same lines to enforce his doctrines about education. "You do not educate a man," he said, "by telling him what he knew not, but by making him what he was not. And making him what he will remain for ever: for no wash of weeds will bring back the faded purple."

Such use of the classics as is made in all these quotations shows how saturated Mr. Gladstone and his contemporaries were with Virgil and Horace, but does not exhibit the influence of the classics in their highest power. The case is very different with the most memorable of all Mr. Gladstone's quotations. This was his citation of Lucretius in the debate, during the Bradlaugh controversy, on the Affirmation Bill of 1883. The passage in which the lines from Lucretius are embedded is too long to be given here, and it may be found in Lord Morley's *Life*. Briefly put, the argument was this: Truth is the expression of the Divine mind in whose hands it may safely be left. Toleration is a method of securing truth. The preservation of the oath draws a line at the point of abstract denial of God, but does not touch that other form of irreligion which admits the existence of divinity but dissociates it from human affairs. And then came the famous passage: "Many of

the members of this House will recollect the majestic and noble lines :

> Omnis enim per se divom natura necessest
> Immortali aevo summa cum pace fruatur,
> Semota a nostris rebus sejunctaque longe.
> Nam privata dolore omni, privata periclis,
> Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri,
> Nec bene promeritis capitur, nec tangitur ira." [1]

Here the quotation was strictly apt, illustrating an argument and fitting into its place almost, as it might seem, of necessity, whilst the lines themselves put the view in question with incomparable magnificence. The effect of the speech and the quotation, felt perhaps in some quarters rather than closely apprehended, was electrical. "The House," says Lord Morley, "though but few perhaps recollected their Lucretius, or had ever even read him, sat, as I well remember, with reverential stillness, hearkening from this born master of moving cadence and high sustained modulation to 'the rise and long roll of the hexameter'—to the plangent lines that have come down across the night of time to us from great Rome." The testimony of another Member who heard the speech is to like effect. "Few of those who heard it," says Lord Curzon, "could follow the

[1] "For the nature of the gods must ever of itself enjoy repose supreme through endless time, far withdrawn from all concerns of ours ; free from all our pains, free from all our perils, strong in resources of its own, needing nought from us, no favours win it, no anger moves" (ii. 648, Lord Morley's translation).

argument; fewer still understood the Latin. But there was a silence as in a church, and a feeling as though the air was fanned by invisible wings."

Similarly moving, and equally illustrative of the abiding power of the ancient poets, are certain apt quotations made impromptu in debate, such as that to which Pitt, in his speech of 1792 in favour of the immediate abolition of the Slave Trade, is said to have been inspired by the shooting of a beam of the rising sun through the windows of the House:

> Nos . . . primus equis Oriens afflavit anhelis,
> Illis sera rubens accendit lumina Vesper.[1]

This has been called "the most beautiful and apt of recorded parliamentary impromptus." None of Pitt's perorations has been more admired, but was the quotation unpremeditated? I very much doubt it. What Lord Stanhope says is this: "I have heard it related by some who at that time were Members of Parliament that the first beams of the rising sun shot through the windows of the House in the midst of this final passage, and seemed, as he looked upwards, to suggest to him without premeditation the eloquent simile and the

[1] Virgil, *Georg.* i. 250, 251. The precise interpretation of the second line has been much disputed, but Pitt used the passage as drawing a contrast between us upon whom the rising sun, with horses panting, casts its earliest breath, and those regions where the red star of evening lights up late beams.

noble Latin lines with which he concluded."[1] The beam seemed to inspire the orator, but things are not always what they seem to enchanted listeners. It must be clear, I think, to any one who reads the speech that the words and figures of the peroration—with its contrast between lands which had earlier received the "beams" of civilisation and those upon which in this latter time it was proposed to confer a like "illumination"—had been carefully chosen to lead up to the Virgilian quotation. But whether wholly unpremeditated or not, the quotation caught a real flame of enthusiasm, and the rhetorical ornament was inspiring.

Of a classical peroration in the making, Lord Morley has given us an engaging picture. He and Mr. Gladstone were at Dalmeny during the election of 1892, and Mr. Gladstone was about to leave for Glasgow. "Just before the carriage came to take him to the train, I heard him calling from the library. In I went, and found him hurriedly thumbing the leaves of a Horace. 'Tell me,' he cried, 'can you put your finger on the passage about Castor and Pollux? I've just thought of something; Castor and Pollux will finish my speech at Glasgow.' 'Isn't it in the Third Book?' said I. 'No, no, I'm pretty sure it is in the First Book,' busily turning over the pages. 'Ah, here it is,' and then he read out

[1] *Life of William Pitt*, vol. ii. p. 145.

the noble lines[1] with animated modulation, shut the book with a bang, and rushed off exultant to the carriage. This became one of the finest of his perorations. His delivery of it that afternoon, they said, was most majestic—the picture of the wreck, and then the calm that gradually brought down the towering billows to the surface of the deep, entrancing the audience like magic." But it is one thing to entrance a public meeting and another to pass a Bill through the House of Lords, and the Liberal policy of Home Rule, which figured in the Glasgow peroration as the star of Castor and Pollux, has to this day failed to still our Irish discontents. But the history of Ireland is strewn with unfulfilled classical quotations, as with other more tragic wrecks. If Mr. Gladstone's application of Horace's lines to Home Rule was falsified by the event, so also was Mr. Pitt's application of a passage in Virgil to the policy of the Union. In his speech of January 31, 1799, there was this passage :

Is it not rather the free and voluntary association of two great countries which join for their common benefit in one Empire where each will retain its proportional

[1] *Odes*, i. 12, 27, thus rendered by Conington :

Soon as gleam
Their stars at sea,
The lash'd spray trickles from the steep,
The wind sinks down, the storm-cloud flies,
The threatening billow on the deep
Obedient lies.

weight and importance under the security of equal laws, reciprocal affection, and inseparable interests, and which want nothing but that indissoluble connection to render both invincible?

> Non ego nec Teucris Italos parere jubebo
> Nec nova regna peto; paribus se legibus ambae
> Invictae gentes aeterna in foedera mittant.[1]

In the use of the figure about the star of Castor and Pollux Mr. Gladstone had been anticipated by Burke, who applied it to the happy results which had followed from the equitable treatment of the Principality of Wales in the reign of Henry VIII. "From that moment, as by a charm, the tumults subsided, obedience was restored, peace, order, and civilisation followed in the train of liberty. When the day-star of the English Constitution had arisen in their hearts, all was harmony within and without"—and then came the same quotation from Horace, except that Mr. Gladstone, speaking to a popular audience, gave it in English, whereas Burke in the House of Commons used the Latin:

> simul alba nautis
> Stella refulsit,
> Defluit saxis agitatus humor;
> Concidunt venti, fugiuntque nubes,
> Et minax, quod sic volnere, ponto
> Unda recumbit.

---

[1] I will not bid the Italian men to serve the Teucrian's will;
Nor for myself seek I the realm; but all unconquered still
Let either folk with equal laws plight peace for evermore.
*Aen.* xii. 189 (W. Morris).

In the second line Pitt substituted the word *nova* for *mihi* in the original.

The passage occurs in the speech on Conciliation with America (March 22, 1775), one of the three "far-shining discourses" on the same subject upon which Lord Morley principally bases his prediction that Burke is destined to "become one of the half-dozen names of established and universal currency, rising above the waywardness of literary caprice or intellectual fashions, as Shakespeare and Milton and Bacon rise above it," and which, he says, "compose the most perfect manual in our literature, or in any literature, for one who approaches the study of public affairs, whether for knowledge or for practice." In the same speech, a little further on, Burke introduced a quotation from Juvenal, which again was borrowed by a later orator. Burke had shown how Wales was pacified by parliamentary representation. "Are not the people of America," he asked, "as much Englishmen as the Welsh?" And then he went on thus: "You will now, Sir, perhaps imagine that I am on the point of proposing to you a scheme for a representation of the Colonies in Parliament. Perhaps I might be inclined to entertain some such thought; but a great flood stops me in my course. *Opposuit natura*—I cannot remove the eternal barriers of the creation." Canning repeated the quotation in his speech on the Roman Catholic Disability Removal Bill (March 16, 1821). But the barriers of nature are not so eternal as Burke

assumed. Hannibal surmounted the walls of snow and ice,[1] and the great flood has been bridged by steam. Measured in time, America, and even Australia, is now nearer to England than were some parts of Great Britain from others in Burke's time.

The flame of enthusiasm has often been handed on to British statesmen and administrators by sayings which "have come down to us from great Rome." Lord Melbourne was never tired, we are told, of quoting that noble sentence of Cicero's: "It has always been my policy to defend the senate on the platform, and the people in parliament."[2] Macaulay used to say that the finest sentence ever written is contained in Caesar's answer to Cicero's message of gratitude for the humanity which the conqueror had displayed towards those political adversaries who had fallen into his power at the surrender of Corfinium: "Meum factum probari abs te, triumpho gaudio.

[1] Opposuit natura Alpemque nivemque,
Diducit scopulos et montem rumpit aceto.
x. 152.

The passage is thus rendered by Dryden:

Spain first he won, the Pyrenaeans past,
And steepy Alps, the mounds that nature cast:
And with corroding juices, as he went,
A passage thro' the living rocks he rent—

the reference being to the tale told by Livy of Hannibal's passage of the Alps, that he blasted by fire and vinegar the rocks which barred his route.

[2] "Ita est a me consulatus peractus, ut nihil sine consilio senatus, nihil non approbante populo Romano egerim, ut semper in rostris curiam, in senatu populum, defenderim" (*In Pisonem*, 3. 7).

*Neque illud me movet quod ii, qui a me dimissi sunt, discessisse dicuntur ut mihi rursus bellum inferrent; nihil enim malo quam et me mei similem esse, et illos sui.*" (I triumph and rejoice that my action should have obtained your approval. Nor am I disturbed when I hear it said that those, whom I have sent off alive and free, will again bear arms against me; for there is nothing which I so much covet as that I should be like myself, and they like themselves.) "Noble fellow!" was Macaulay's marginal note against this passage. The letters in which Caesar expressed his clemency towards his conquered enemies were, says Sir George Trevelyan, quite as much to the taste of Fox. When the Duke of Enghien was arrested Fox copied out the epistle to Oppius, with the intention of sending it to Napoleon, but was prevented by the arrival of the fatal news.[1]

How often has inspiration been found by British political and military officers in the famous lines of Virgil defining wherein lay the true greatness of Rome:

> Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento;
> Hae tibi erunt artes; pacisque imponere morem,
> Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos.[2]

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[1] *The Marginal Notes of Lord Macaulay*, p. 42, and *The Early Life of Charles James Fox*, p. 282 *n*. The passage of Caesar's letter to Cicero is from the Letters to Atticus, 9. 16. 2; for Caesar's letter to Oppius, see *Ad Att.* 9. 7c.

[2] I can find no verse translation which seems to do justice to this famous passage (*Aen.* vi. 853). So I give two of the best prose translations for the reader to make choice from. "Be thy charge, O Roman, to rule the nations in thine empire; this shall be thine art, to lay down the laws of peace, to be merciful to the conquered and beat the haughty down" (Mackail).

The lines of a later poet, which I have cited elsewhere,[1] describe in greater detail the humane policy of the Roman Empire, and have often been applied to the British commonwealth of states. In the same poem Claudian goes on to speak of "the facilities of intercourse introduced by the Romans into their vast empire, partly by the maintenance of peace, and partly by their roads—a passage," says Sir John Sandys, "which has been reduced to sober truth by railways and steamers in the British Empire," and which has been repeated in verse, it may be added, by Mr. Kipling :[2]

Hujus pacificis debemus moribus omnes
Quod veluti patriis regionibus utitur hospes,
Quod sedem mutare licet ; quod cernere Thulen
Lusus, et horrendos quondam penetrare recessus ;
Quod bibimus passim Rhodanum, potamus Orontem ;
Quod cuncti gens una sumus.[3]

---

"Yours, Roman, be the lesson to govern the nations as their lord. This is your destined culture, to impose the settled rule of peace, to spare the humbled and to crush the proud" (Conington). It will be noticed that the two translators take the word *imperio* in different senses. Which is right?

[1] *Literary Recreations*, p. 175.

[2] Keep ye the Law—be swift in all obedience—
Clear the land of evil, drive the road and bridge the ford.
Make ye sure to each his own
That he reap where he hath sown ;
By the peace among Our peoples let men know we serve the Lord !

[3] There is no good translation of Claudian. Here is the version of the lines quoted above in the translation by A. Hawkins (1817) :

In peace her favours fully we obtain,
Like fields paternal, view each foreign plain,
Remove at will :—see Thule's distant shore ;
Recesses, horrid thought of old, explore ;
Drink waters from the Rhone : th' Orontes' stream ;
And, thus in union, one great nation seem.— *Stilicho*, iii. 154.

The two passages of Claudian were aptly quoted by the Public Orator at Cambridge in presenting for honorary degrees—first, Sir William Hunter, the editor of the great *Imperial Gazetteer of India*; and secondly, Lord Strathcona, one of the two foremost promoters of the Canadian Pacific Railway.[1]

Is it true, as was once written, that beneficent empires exist but to dig their own graves? It is the fear of some, and the hope of others, that such is destined to be the fate of the British Empire in India. If so, a quotation may be suggested for some future Secretary of State, if the wheel of fashion and the progress of education should by that time have restored the classics to Parliament. "It may be," wrote Lord Cromer, "that at some future and far distant time we shall be justified, to use a metaphor of perhaps the greatest of the Latin poets, in handing over the torch of progress and civilisation in India to those whom we have ourselves civilised":[2]

> Augescunt aliae gentes, aliae minuuntur,
> Inque brevi spatio mutantur saecla animantum,
> Et quasi cursores vitai lampada tradunt.[3]

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[1] See a letter by Sir John Sandys in the *Times*, January 14, 1910.

[2] *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*, p. 127. Lord Cromer, writing in 1910, added, however, "All that can be said at present is that until human nature entirely changes, and until racial and religious passions disappear from the face of the earth, the relinquishment of that torch would almost certainly lead to its extinction."

[3] Lucretius, *De Rer. Nat.* ii. 77-79, thus translated by Calverley:

> Bourgeons one generation, and one fades. Let but a few years
> Pass, and a race has arisen which was not: as in a racecourse,
> One hands on to another the burning torch of Existence.

*Omnium consensu capax imperii nisi imperasset:* the famous sentence passed by Tacitus upon Galba has often occurred to critics of "great, wise, and eminent men" who have disappointed expectations. Mr. Asquith quoted it in his obituary oration upon Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman: "There have been men who, in the cruel phrase of the ancient historian, were universally judged to be fit for the highest place only until they attained and held it. Our late Prime Minister belonged to that rarer class whose fitness for such a place, until they had attained and held it, was never adequately understood." A very happy adaptation of a classical quotation. But Mr. Asquith, who is so well qualified to shine in this art, pays regard to the passing of fashion, and shows his taste for the most part in quotations from the English poets. For peroration of the same speech on Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman he used the "Character of a Happy Life" by Sir Henry Wotton, and the conclusion of his tribute to Alfred Lyttelton will be remembered: "Those who loved him—and they are many—in all schools of opinion, in all ranks and walks of life, when they think of him will say to themselves:

> This was the happy Warrior; this was He
> That every Man in arms should wish to be."

It is a testimony, by the way, to Wordsworth's success in drawing a picture of an ideal type of

British character that his poem should have been applied by different writers or speakers to many different men. Ruskin applied the description of "The Happy Warrior" to Sir Herbert Edwardes, "and (he himself would have added) to many more of the sons of Sacred England, who went forth for her, not only conquering, and to conquer, but saving, and to save." Jowett in a sermon applied the poem to General Gordon, and I remember a meeting, held on the evening of the day when news had reached London of the death of Lord Roberts, at which the poem was quoted of him. To Lord Kitchener Mr. Asquith applied some words from *Lycidas*. "Few men," he said, "that I have known had less reason to shrink from submitting their lives to

> those pure eyes
> And perfect witness of all-judging Jove."

The quotation caused some confusion to reporters who had not strictly meditated the thankless Muse, but if the habit of classical quotation is to disappear from Parliament, let us hope that the tradition will yet be preserved by such apt references to the British classics as Mr. Asquith makes. Mr. Lloyd George seldom quotes the poets—at any rate in his speeches in English. The poetry of his rhetoric is home-made, and taken from the mists and streams and mountains of the land of his fathers.

The Great War suggested many apt references to the classics; for, though expelled from Parliament, they have recurred in pamphlets or letters to the newspapers. What was the war about? At one time even the ablest of onlookers thought, or seemed to think, that it was a case of six on the one side and half-a-dozen on the other, whilst other people wanted to know what Serbia had to do with Britain. One of the early propagandists on the British side reminded his readers that "it was a reflection of the first of political philosophers that disturbances in States, though they may arise on trifling occasions, do not involve trifling issues," and showed that a world-wide war, starting from the case of Serbia, involved from the first a fundamental conflict of ideals.[1] President Hibben, of Princeton, startled a mass meeting in New York, we are told,[2] with the opening remark, "I am a peace-at-any-price man." Amazement was changed to enthusiasm when he added, "The present price is war, and I am prepared to pay it." Similarly in a speech at Carlisle Mr. Lowther gave as "a paradox" the proposition that the aim of war is peace. A professor improved the occasion by reminding us that the Speaker's paradox was to Greek thinkers not a paradox but almost a platitude.[3] "The

[1] *Why Britain is at War*, a pamphlet issued by the Victoria League in August 1914, the reference being to Aristotle, *Politics*, v. 4.

[2] By Dr. Parkin in the *Times*, September 9, 1918.

[3] Professor Sonnenschein in the *Times*, January 2, 1918.

end in view of war is peace, as has often been said, just as the end in view of business is leisure, says Aristotle in his *Politics* (vii. 15). And in the previous chapter Aristotle applies this principle in a way which would, I think, command general approval at the present day: 'We ought to engage in military training, not for the sake of enslaving others, but in the first place in order that we may not ourselves be enslaved by others, and in the second place in order to exercise hegemony in the interests of the governed.'" From time to time during the war, as outrage succeeded to outrage, there were discussions as to the proper limits of reprisal and retaliation. The headmaster of a public school [1] recalled "some of the warning words of the wisest and greatest of all heathen historians, if not of all historians, to the minds of some of those who used to read them in their schooldays, and are now advocating a policy of retaliation."

At such a time all was in disorder, and human nature, which is always ready to transgress the laws, having now trampled them under foot, delighted to show that her passions were ungovernable, that she was stronger than justice, and the enemy of everything above her. If malignity had not exercised a fatal power, how could any one have preferred revenge to piety, and gain to innocence? But, when men are retaliating on others, they are reckless of the future, and do not hesitate to

[1] Mr. Upcott, of Christ's Hospital, in the *Times*, February 14, 1916.

annul those common laws of humanity to which every individual trusts for his own hope of deliverance should he ever be overtaken by calamity; they forget that in their own hour of need they will look for them in vain (iii. 84, Jowett's translation).

We may agree or disagree with the views expressed, but in any case it was well to be reminded of them.

The war was prolific in reproaches or exhortations from arm-chair critics of the club windows and military experts, self-styled, in the newspapers. How apt in this connexion was a quotation from Livy made one day by the *Westminster Gazette*!

In every circle, and truly, at every table, there are people who lead armies into Macedonia; who know where the camp ought to be placed; what posts ought to be occupied by troops; when and through what pass Macedonia ought to be entered; where magazines should be formed; how provisions should be conveyed by land and sea; and when it is proper to engage the enemy, when to lie quiet. And they not only determine what is best to be done, but if anything is done in any other manner than what they have pointed out they arraign the Consul as if he were on his trial. These are great impediments to those who have the management of affairs. . . . If any one thinks himself qualified to give advice respecting the war which I am to conduct, which may prove advantageous to the public, let him not refuse his assistance to the State, but let him come with me to Macedonia. He shall be furnished by me with a ship, a horse, a tent, and even with his travelling charges. But if he thinks this too much trouble, and prefers the repose

of a city life to the toils of war, let him not on land assume the office of a pilot. The city in itself furnishes abundance of topics for conversation: let him confine himself to these topics and rest assured that we shall be content with such counsels as shall be framed within our camp.

The passage comes from a speech made by Lucius Aemilius Paulus, a Roman Consul, who had been selected to conduct the war with the Macedonians in 168 B.C. Verily there is nothing new under the sun.

And when the end came with the fall of the Kaiser and the surrender of his fleet, men turned, for adequate expression of the thoughts suggested by these stupendous events, to passages in Greek tragedy with its haunting refrain of Arrogance and Nemesis—to the chant of the aged men of Thebes in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles:

> 'Tis Pride that breeds the tyrant; drunken deep
> With perilous things is she,
> Which bring not peace: up, reeling, steep on steep
> She climbs, till lo, the rock-edge, and the leap
> To that which needs must be,
> The land where the strong foot is no more strong;[1]

and to "the burst of noble verse" which Aeschylus puts into the mouth of the ghost of Darius in order to draw the moral of the fall of another haughty despot after "The Day" of Salamis:

[1] The passage from the *Oed. Tyr.*, 873, was quoted in a letter in the *Times* of Nov. 13, 1918, and that from the *Persae*, 821, in a leading article in the same paper on Nov. 22. The English version of the former passage is Professor Gilbert Murray's; that of the latter was given in the *Times*.

For the grain
Of overweening Pride, after full flower,
Beareth a sheaf of Doom, and garners in
A harvest all of tears.

To point out the counter-moral of our own temperate kings, Mr. Asquith, in the House of Commons, quoted Shirley's lines as "summing up and expressing the feelings of many of us :

The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armour against fate ;
Death lays his icy hand on kings.

And at the end of these fine lines he adds what we in these testing times in Great Britain have seen and proved to be the secret and the safeguard of our Monarchy :

Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in their dust." [1]

In like fashion, when the thoughts of many were turned to the search for words adequate to express their feelings in memorials to our fallen soldiers, models were found in the exquisite epitaphs preserved in the Greek Anthology (see below, pp. 332, 376).

In expounding the policy of social reconstruction which was to follow the war, Mr. Bonar Law went back to the classics. "All these problems," he said, "are not new. The best known of classic historians said, 'It is men that make a city,

[1] Speech on the Address to the King, *Times*, Nov. 19, 1918.

not ships or walls without men.'[1] We have discovered that in this war. The thing we care for most—and it is really the conservative element in every nation—is to make the conditions of life of the vast majority of the people as good as it is possible to make them. That is our aim."[2] It is interesting that Mr. Bonar Law should have quoted Thucydides in support of the Coalition, though a reference to the speech in which Nicias sought to rally the discomfited Athenians was hardly of the best omen.

As relevant to the financial side of the war and the cost of social reconstruction, a classical quotation made in the House of Commons a few years ago may be recalled. The speaker was warning the House to expect higher taxation in order to meet increased expenditure on public purposes. "They must revise their views," he said, "as to the relationship of private and public expenditure, and of the kind of demands which the public made on people's incomes. There were words of Horace showing that, in the noble days of old, people expected narrow private, and large public, expenditure :

> Privatus illis census erat brevis,
> Commune magnum."[3]

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[1] *Thuc.* vii. 77, 7 : *ἄνδρες γὰρ πόλις καὶ οὐ τείχη οὐδὲ νῆες ἀνδρῶν κεναί.*

[2] *Times*, Nov. 18, 1918.

[3] "Men's private fortunes were then small, the public income great." *Odes*, ii. 15.

I omitted to date this cutting from the Commons debates, and cannot now identify the speaker or the occasion.

The ode in which the poet compares the magnificence of country seats in his day with the simpler life of old times may well have been "the birth of some chance morning among the Sabine hills"; the lines just quoted will come home to the income-tax payers of to-day with a sense of their "vivid exactness."

The reader will have recognised the reference above to a beautiful passage in the writings of Newman. In his *Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* he distinguishes between various ways in which we entertain propositions, and as an instance of real assent—of assent, that is, because we recognise a statement as true by our own experience—he gives this illustration: "Let us consider," he says, "how differently young and old are affected by some classic author, such as Homer or Horace. Passages, which to a boy are but rhetorical commonplaces, neither better nor worse than a hundred others which any clever writer might supply, which he gets by heart and thinks very fine, and imitates, as he thinks, successfully, in his own flowing versification, at length come home to him, when long years have passed, and he has had experience of life, and pierce him as if he had never before known them, with their sad earnestness and vivid exactness. Then he comes to understand how it is that lines, the birth of some chance morning or evening at an Ionian festival, or among the Sabine

hills, have lasted generation after generation for thousands of years, with a power over the mind, and a charm, which the current literature of his own day, with all its obvious advantages, is utterly unable to rival."

Here, to begin with, is a simple and (in more senses than one) homely instance: Tennyson, on returning from the Italian journey described in "The Daisy," quoted as he entered his house the lines of Catullus:

> O! quid solutis est beatius curis,
> Cum mens onus reponit, ac peregrino
> Labore fessi venimus larem ad nostrum,
> Desideratoque acquiescimus lecto,
> Hoc est quod unum est pro laboribus tantis.

The schoolboy is vexed by notes on grammar and allusions, and he is not likely to have suffered from fatigue in foreign travel, but to the middle-aged traveller the vivid exactness of the poem makes a convincing appeal. "It is the special delight of travel," says Mr. Hugh Macnaghten in his pleasant *Story of Catullus*, "that however much we have enjoyed every day and every hour of our wanderings, none the less the home-coming is the best part of all, and the comfort of one's own room and one's own bed is never so dearly prized as after a month in Italy or Greece. And Catullus, just returned to Sirmio, has felt this and expressed it once for all." I give myself the pleasure of transcribing Calverley's beautiful translation:

Gem of all isthmuses and isles that lie,
Fresh or salt water's children, in clear lake
Or ampler ocean : with what joy do I
Approach thee, Sirmio ! Oh ! am I awake,
Or dream that once again mine eye beholds
Thee, and has looked its last on Thracian wolds ?
Sweetest of sweets to me that pastime seems,
When the mind drops her burden : when—the pain
Of travel past—our own cot we regain,
And nestle on the pillow of our dreams !
'Tis this one thought that cheers us as we roam.
Hail, O fair Sirmio ! Joy, thy lord is here !
Joy too, ye waters of the Golden Mere !
And ring out, all ye laughter-peals of home !

It is no wonder that Tennyson, who travelled with pleasure indeed but with some difficulty, should have thought of this poem on returning home. That was in 1852. Some thirty years later (1880) he was at Sirmio itself, and there wrote the beautiful lines to Catullus called "Frater Ave atque Vale." "Miss Ritchie was staying at Farringford," says the poet's son, "when we came back from our foreign travels." Tennyson was full of Catullus, and made Miss Ritchie, who was no Latin scholar, follow the words as he read through some of the favourite poems. "His finger moved from word to word, and he dwelt with intense satisfaction on the adequacy of the expression and of the sounds, on the mastery of the proper handling of quantity, and on the perfection of the art."

With what a different meaning, again, must

the poignant words of Pindar come to the schoolboy, who wrestles with the text aided only by the information that "Boeckh reads" this or "Dissen conjectures" that, and to the life-worn veteran with the scars of experience upon him!

> Things of a day—what are we, and what not? Man is a dream of shadows. Nevertheless when a glory from God hath shined on them, a clear light abideth upon men, and serene life.

> Forasmuch as men must die, wherefore should one sit vainly in the dark through a dull and nameless age, and without lot in noble deeds?[1]

These, Lord Morley tells us, were "the words from antique books" which Mr. Gladstone copied out at the beginning of his diary for the year of his political jubilee. A political moralist might draw a sententious contrast between these entries from Pindar by Mr. Gladstone and the one recorded reference to the same poet by Lord Palmerston. A grateful Phil-Hellene had sent him some Greek wines. After tasting them Palmerston remarked, "Now for the first time I understand what Pindar meant when he said, Water is best."[2]

No story of a classical quotation is better known, nor is any better, than that of Carteret's

[1] Ernest Myers's translation of *Pyth.* viii. 135 and *Olym.* i. 131.
[2] *Olym.* i. 1.

from the 12th *Iliad*. The story was told at first hand by Robert Wood, traveller, scholar, and politician, in his *Essay on the Original Genius of Homer* (posthumously printed in 1767)—an essay which is mentioned by Goethe as one of the books which fell into his hands when his powers were first developing themselves and strongly interested him. Matthew Arnold quoted the story in his first lecture "On Translating Homer," and he tells in his "Letters" of his pleasure in hearing that Sainte Beuve had quoted the story from him in the course of a personal mention. Lord Rosebery tells it in his Address at Edinburgh on "Bookishness and Statesmanship," and Lord Morley introduces it into his monograph on Walpole. It is indeed, as Lord Morley says, one of those stories "which every lover of scholarship as a fine adornment of greatness in character or action will always delight to remember." As Carteret (Lord Granville) lay dying (1762), Wood, being then Under-Secretary of State, took to him as Lord President the preliminary articles of the Treaty of Paris. "I found him," says Wood, "so languid that I proposed postponing my business for another time, but he insisted that I should stay, saying that it could not prolong his life to neglect his duty." He went on to repeat the beautiful lines in which Sarpedon says to Glaucus that if keeping back from the fray would keep back age and death from them, then indeed neither would he

himself fight amid the foremost[1] nor send the other into the battle; "but now, since ten thousand shapes of death hover over us, and these no mortal may escape, now forward let us go"—ἴομεν. "His Lordship," adds Wood, "repeated the last word several times with a calm and determinate resignation; and after a serious pause of some minutes, he desired to hear the Treaty read, to which he listened with great attention, and recovered spirits enough to declare the approbation of a dying statesman (I use his own words) 'on the most glorious war and most honourable peace this nation ever saw.'"

> Could all our care elude the gloomy grave
> Which claims no less the fearful than the brave,
> For lust of fame I should not vainly dare
> In fighting fields, nor urge thy soul to war.
> But since, alas! ignoble age must come,
> Disease, and death's inexorable doom;
> The life which others pay, let us bestow,
> And give to fame, what we to nature owe;
> Brave though we fall, and honoured if we live,
> Or let us glory gain, or glory give.

"You must not call it Homer," said Bentley of Pope's *Iliad*, but in his rendering of the speech of Sarpedon to Glaucus he attains, as one of his biographers says, "the highest level of which the heroic couplet is capable," and shows in perfection

[1] Carteret—true to a ruling passion—"dwelt with particular emphasis on the third line":

οὔτε κεν αὐτὸς ἐνὶ πρώτοισι μαχοίμην.

"a style springing naturally out of the genius of a free nation, and the lofty eloquence developed from free parliamentary debate."

It was of another passage in the *Iliad* that "the noble and puissant William Pitt, Earl of Chatham," thought during his last days. In describing the famous scene in the House of Lords, and the profound impression caused by his death a few weeks later, the historian goes on to say, "It was afterwards remembered that as he lay on his death-bed looking forward to his own immediate end, he caused his son to read to him the passage in Homer describing the stately obsequies of Hector and the sorrow and despair of Troy."[1] It was the younger Pitt who read the lines, and many thoughts must have surged in the minds of father and of son when they reached the lament of Andromache. "Husband," she cried, "he of whom we are the ill-starred parents is still a mere child, and I fear he may not reach manhood. Ere he can do so, our city will be razed and overthrown, for you who watched over it are no more—you who were its saviour." Pitt was older than that when his father died, and was presently to become the Minister under whom England saved herself by her exertions, but he was to be cut off before she had saved Europe by her example. A few days

[1] Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, iv. 85; and Basil Williams, *Life of Chatham*, ii. 331. The passage from Homer, too long to quote here, is in the *Iliad*, xxiv. 704 *seq.*

after reading the passage in Homer he was "bearing his part as chief mourner in the gorgeous procession that followed Chatham to that grave in Westminster Abbey which, in less than thirty years, was, in still darker days, to open for himself." [1]

Hardly less affecting, though in domestic *genre* rather than in the heroic style of Carteret's quotation from Homer, is the incident which Sir George Trevelyan relates of the death-bed of Fox. His favourite example of the pathos that he admired most of all qualities in Virgil was the farewell with which the aged Evander sent Pallas forth to his last battle. Every one will remember the last lines of the passage :

> Sin aliquem infandum casum, Fortuna, minaris :
> Nunc, o nunc liceat crudelem abrumpere vitam,
> Dum curae ambiguae, dum spes incerta futuri,
> Dum te, care puer, mea sola et sera voluptas,
> Complexu teneo, gravior neu nuntius auris
> Volneret.[2]

"The beauty of this passage," says Sir George

[1] Lord Rosebery's *Pitt*, p. 9.

[2] *Aen.* viii. 578, thus rendered by Conington :

> But ah ! if Fortune be my foe,
> And meditate some crushing blow,
> Now, now the thread in mercy break,
> While hope seems dim and cares mistake,
> While still I clasp thee, darling boy,
> My latest and my only joy,
> Nor let assurance worse than fear
> With cruel tidings wound my ear.

Trevelyan, "in his years of vigour Fox was always ready to expound and assert; and when his time came to die, he solemnised his parting with the nephew whom he loved as a son by bidding the young man repeat aloud, and then repeat once more, lines which, even at a less trying moment, few who have ever cried over a book can read without tears." "The uncle and nephew," continues Sir George, "at times almost conversed in Virgil. When Fox was suffering under the dropsy which killed him, Lord Holland tried to cheer him with *dabit Deus his quoque finem*.[1] "Aye," he replied with a faint smile, "but *finem*, young one, may have two senses."

The *Aeneid*, says Professor Sellar, possesses the power, which distinguishes the older Latin writers, of stamping some grave or magnanimous lesson in imperishable character on the mind, and he cites as his first example a famous line from the sixth book. An instance of the power of this line occurs in a pathetic passage of our modern literature. Ruskin during his later years was subject, as is well known, to recurrent attacks of brain fever. He fought against them, and in lucid intervals between the attacks was able to write one at least of the most charming of his books. He attributed some part of his resilience to Virgil. In describing one of his illnesses and the adverse

[1] *Aen.* i. 199: "O ye who have borne heavier evils, to these too God will give an end."

circumstance which retarded recovery, he says this: "Through all such trouble—which came upon me as I was recovering, as if meant to throw me back into the grave,—I held out and recovered, repeating to myself, or rather having always murmured in my ears, at every new trial, one Latin line,

Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito."[1]

A line from the *Aeneid*[2] served as a trumpet-call to a new life in another sort. Savonarola's father pressed upon him a career of worldly ambition. He discarded the advice and entered the order of St. Dominic. Mr. Symonds gives us the letter which he wrote to his father after taking this step: "The motives by which I have been led to enter into a religious life are these: The great misery of the world; the iniquities of men, their rapes, adulteries, robberies, their pride, idolatry, and fearful blasphemies: so that things have come to such a pass that no one can be found acting righteously. Many times a day have I repeated with tears the verse:

Heu, fuge crudeles terras, fuge littus avarum."[3]

So true is it, as Professor Sellar again says, that

[1] "Yield not to any ills, but go all the bolder to face them." *Aen.* vi. 95.

[2] "Oh! flee the cruel land, flee the greedy shore." *Aen.* iii. 44.

[3] *Renaissance in Italy*, ed. 1897, vol. i. p. 392.

in Virgil "a mature and mellow truth of sentiment, a conformity to the deeper experiences of life in every age, a fine humanity as well as a generous elevation of feeling, and some magical charm of music in his words, have enabled them to serve many minds in many ages as a symbol of some swelling thought or overmastering emotion, the force and meaning of which they could scarcely define to themselves."

To another Latin author belongs the distinction of having converted an unbeliever to Christianity. "When a frivolous youth," says St. Augustine, "I studied books on eloquence, in which I desired to gain distinction, and I chanced in the ordinary course of school reading to open a book of Cicero, whose style all admire, though not his spirit. The work in question urges us to study philosophy, and is called *Hortensius*. This book changed my feelings and turned me to pray before thee, and altered all my prayers and desires. Suddenly all my empty hopes lost their charm. I longed for eternal wisdom with a strange yearning at my heart and I essayed to rise, to return to thee." Only fragments of the book which thus cast its spell over St. Augustine remain. He was not the only Ciceronian among the fathers of the Church. St. Jerome confesses that, after he had surrendered all earthly ties, he sinned by reading Cicero even on fast-days. He was once seized by a fever and given up for dead. While lying unconscious he

was in a vision brought before the judgement-seat and asked, "What art thou?" He replied, "A Christian." The voice came back, "No, thou art not a Christian, but a Ciceronian, since where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also." He fell on his face, and swearing never again to read books of worldly wisdom, was cured of his malady. St. Jerome, says the writer whom I am quoting,[1] rated his strength too highly. The Siren's song never ceased to haunt him, and he was taunted with perjury by a rival, who said, "Whence comes your fluency, your brilliancy of thought, your power of expression? If I am not mistaken, you still read Cicero in secret." Jerome replies that his promise was only for the future. He cannot blot out of his mind what he has learnt: to do this he must needs drink of the waters of Lethe of which the poets tell. Jerome never drank of those waters. His writings contain many involuntary reminiscences of the classics. "What has Horace to do with the Psalter," he exclaimed, "or Virgil with the Gospel, or Cicero with the Apostle?" Yet, when speaking of the catacombs at Rome which contained the graves of the apostles and martyrs, and of the darkness reigning in their subterranean passages, he says: "Here one can only move step by step, and in the darkness one is reminded of

[1] "Ciceronianism," by A. C. Clark, an essay in a volume entitled *English Literature and the Classics* (Oxford, 1912). Mr. Clark's chapter is a most interesting survey of Cicero's influence.

Virgil's *Horror ubique animo simul ipsa silentia terrent.*"[1] "One of the pillars of the Church," exclaims Professor Comparetti, "borrowing the words of a pagan to express the feelings with which the most venerable recesses of this Christian sanctuary inspired him." Such is the haunting power of the classics.

The choice of a favourite classical author, or of a particular quotation, is often an index to a man's character and gifts. The sonnet of Matthew Arnold, "To a Friend" ("Who prop, thou ask'st, in these bad days, my mind?"), has been dismissed by Professor Saintsbury as savouring too much of priggishness; but it was an early piece, and the poet's life and work proved that it was sincere. Homer, Sophocles, and Epictetus were in their several spheres Arnold's models of art and counsel. Of him, as of "the mellow glory of the Attic stage," it may truly be said that from youth to age he kept an even-balanc'd soul, which

> Business could not make dull, nor Passion wild.

How characteristic, again, of the life of Edward FitzGerald was one of his favourite quotations from Horace. He cultivated his chosen patch of vineyard faithfully, but felt no compelling call to larger undertakings, and in letters to more than one friend he cited—

[1] *Aen.* ii. 755: "While on the heart lies weight of fear, and e'en the hush brings dread" (W. Morris).

O beate Sesti,
Vitae summa brevis spem nos vetat inchoare longam.[1]

With this, contrast as characteristic of the ambitious industries of George Eliot, the sentence from Cicero's letters which she chose as a motto for the best of her poems—

Longum illud tempus, quam non ero, magis me movet, quam hoc exiguum.[2]

The classics have sometimes been used to furnish a good gesture on leaving the scene. Thus, of Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, the Jacobite, it is recorded that he died with great composure and intrepidity, and that before placing his head upon the block he repeated the noble line of Horace[3]—

Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.

It was a characteristic appropriation; "but in truth," adds the historian, "no man was ever less strongly imbued with that sentiment except perhaps its writer!"[4]

[1] *Odes*, i. 4, thus paraphrased by Sir Theodore Martin:

O Sestius, happy Sestius! use the moments as they pass,
Far-reaching hopes are not for us, the creatures of a day.

[2] "That long time when I shall cease to be moves me more than this little life."—*To Atticus*, xii. 18. 1.

[3] None of the verse translations with which I am acquainted have succeeded with this famous line (*Odes*, iii. 2. 13): "It is sweet and seemly to die for one's country."

[4] Lord Stanhope's *History of England from the Peace of Utrecht to the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle*, vol. iii. p. 479.

It was of a passage in the *Aeneid* that Atterbury thought when facing the prospect of death in exile. "After all," he wrote in the year before his death to Pope, "I do and must love my country, with all its faults and blemishes; even that part of the constitution which wounded me unjustly, through my side, shall ever be dear to me. My last wish shall be like that of Father Paul, *Esto perpetua*. And when I die at a distance from it, it will be in the same manner as Virgil describes the expiring Peloponnesian:

Sternitur . . . et dulces moriens reminiscitur Argos."[1]

How interesting, by the way, it is that the best poem of Macaulay should have been inspired by the cause with which as a politician he had least sympathy. The poem is an "Epitaph on a Jacobite," who

Heard on Lavernia Scargill's whispering trees,
And pined by Arno for my lovelier Tees.

The last lines of the piece are in the spirit of Atterbury's letter, though the Dean lies beneath the nave of the Abbey, albeit in a nameless grave:

Oh, thou, whom chance leads to this nameless stone,
From that proud country which was once mine own,
By those white cliffs I never more must see,
By that dear language which I spake like thee,
Forget all feuds, and shed one English tear
O'er English dust. A broken heart lies here.

[1] *Aen.* x. 782: "He is laid low, and as he dies remembers pleasant Argos."

Lord Stanhope's note on Lord Lovat is as it may be; but Horace has at any rate lent courage to other men both in large and in small trials. The famous ode from which Browning took the title of one of his dramatic romances (*Instans Tyrannus*), has a place in a passage of Dutch history. When Cornelius de Witt, falsely accused of conspiring against the Stadtholder, was put to the rack, he is said to have repeated the lines

> Justum et tenacem propositi virum
> Non civium ardor prava jubentium
> Non voltus instantis tyranni
> Mente quatit solida.[1]

What inspiration may be had from Horace has been taught by Mr. Kipling in the admirable commentary on the 5th ode of the third book, "Regulus," which is included in *A Diversity of Creatures*. Fortunate indeed are the boys who may find such a lesson in their real school-life, and that such teachers do verily exist is in the grateful knowledge of many of us. "Regulus was in earnest," Mr. Kipling makes his schoolmaster say. "He was also engaged at the same time in cutting his own throat with every word he uttered. . . . Regulus was not thinking about his own life. He was telling Rome the truth. He

[1] The man of firm and righteous will,
No rabble, clamorous for the wrong,
No tyrant's brow, whose frown may kill,
Can shake the strength that makes him strong.
*Odes*, iii. 3 (Conington).

was playing for his side. Those lines from the 18th to the 40th ought to be written in blood." And especially the passage beginning with the words *Atqui sciebat quae sibi barbarus Tortor pararet*—

> The whole force of it lies in the *atqui*.
>
> "Although he knew," Winton suggested.
>
> "Stronger than that, I think."
>
> "He who knew well," Malpass interpolated.
>
> "Ye-es. 'Well though he knew.' I don't like Conington's 'well-witting.' It's Wardour Street."
>
> "Well though he knew what the savage torturer was —was getting ready for him," said Winton.
>
> "Ye-es. 'Had in store for him.'"
>
> "Yet he brushed aside his kinsmen and the people delaying his return."
>
> "Ye-es; but then how do you render *obstantes*?"

And so forth. "Yet there are things in human garments," says the master, "which will tell you that Horace was a flaneur—a man about town." How Ruskin would have enjoyed that comment! He has many a passage to like effect on the sincerity of Horace. And how warmly, too, Mr. Gladstone would have approved the selection of this ode, though I fear that he would not equally have agreed with some of Mr. Kipling's modern instances. Mr. G. was once discussing, as was his pleasant wont, who was the greatest Latin poet :—"Would you place Virgil first?" he asked. "Oh, no," replied Lord Morley, "Lucretius much

the first for the greatest and sublimest of poetic qualities." "Mr. G. seemed to assent to this, though disposed to make a fight for the second *Aeneid* as equal to anything. He expressed his admiration for Catullus, and then he was strong that Horace would run anybody else very hard, breaking out with the lines about Regulus—*Atqui sciebat quae sibi barbarus Tortor pararet.*" Conington's translation of the whole passage is subjoined.[1]

"Much better this morning," wrote Ruskin in his diary after recovery from illness; "more in my heart than I can write, except that I got two oracles from Horace last night. '*Fortem memento*,' I remembered naturally enough; but '*Mors et fugacem persequitur virum*,' being opened at, decided me to go to London." Ruskin, it will be seen, had recourse sometimes to *Sortes*. "I

[1] His wife's pure kiss he waved aside,
And prattling boys, as one disgraced,
They tell us, and with manly pride
Stern on the ground his visage placed.

With counsel thus ne'er else aread,
He nerved the fathers' weak intent,
And, girt by friends that mourn'd him, sped
Into illustrious banishment.

Well witting what the torturer's art
Design'd him, with like unconcern
The press of kin he push'd apart,
And crowds encumbering his return.

As though, some tedious business o'er
Of clients' court, his journey lay
Towards Venafrum's grassy floor,
Or Sparta-built Tarentum's bay.

am better," he wrote to Charles Eliot Norton, "though I was uncomfortably ill last night, and being summoned to London to give evidence on a charge of forgery, variously painful to me, was considering whether I would go or not—I greatly trust in the *Sortes Horatianae*, as well as Virgilian, at least for me, and opening my Horace at '*Mors et fugacem*,' determined at once to go: and have been much more comfortable in mind and body ever since." He says that he remembered *Fortem memento* naturally enough, but it had been better for his peace if he had remembered aright that the word was *aequam*, not *fortem*.[1] He was ever possessed more of courage than of equanimity, and thus do men turn their oracles to their natural bent.

A punning application of the same famous line is the subject of a story which is told in Greville's *Journal* (Oct. 26, 1842). He had it from Thomas Grenville, the book collector. "He told me a story of Lord North and his son Frank, afterwards Lord Guildford, of whom he was very fond, though he was always in scrapes and in want of money. One day Frank seemed very much out of spirits, and his father asked him what was the matter. With some hesitation, real or pretended, he at last said, 'Why, father, the

[1] The opening words of *Odes*, ii. 3: Aequam memento rebus in arduis servare mentem ("An equal mind, when storms o'ercloud, Maintain" (Conington). Ruskin's other line is from Odes, iii. 2 ("Death overtakes too the man who flees").

truth is, I have no money, and I am so distressed that I have even been obliged to sell that little mare you gave me the other day.' To which Lord North replied, 'Oh, Frank, you should never have done that; you ought to have recollected the precept of Horace, *Equam memento rebus in arduis servare.*'" A clever alteration of a famous line in Virgil was given the other day in a University oration. The hopes founded on the Irish Convention were made the subject of a passing reference, and the orator said:

Tendebantque manus ripae Ulterioris amore.

It must have been the extreme felicity of the thing that reconciled the fastidious taste of the orator to taking a liberty, else unpardonable, with one of the most pathetic lines in ancient poetry.[1]

A few instances may next be given of classical quotations used as small change of daily life in correspondence or conversation. The classics have sometimes served for a sort of shorthand in communication. It may be remembered that in the modern history of South Africa the telegraph wire was often used to convey political precept by biblical reference. When, for instance, Dr. Jameson was preparing to attack Lobengula's impis, Mr. Rhodes telegraphed to him, "Read

[1] *Aen.* vi. 314: "And stretched out their hands in longing for the further shore" (*ripae ulterioris amore*).

Luke xiv. 31;" and at a later date, when the Raid was in contemplation, and President Kruger had intercepted a biblical telegram giving a hint of it, he replied by another, intended for his own burghers, "Read Psalm cxviii. 7." In like fashion, when Mr. Gladstone was preparing his first Home Rule Bill, Tennyson sent word to him to "Read Pindar, *Pythian*, iv. 485": "It is an easy thing even for a small man to shake a city, but to set it firm again in its place, this is the difficult task, unless by some sudden interposition God guide the ruler's hand." One would like to know what classical retort Mr. Gladstone had ready. He was too courteous to have sent, but, as his friend was often intruding political counsel, he may perhaps have thought of, this message, "Read Plato, *Apology*, 22": "I observed that upon the strength of their poetry the poets believed themselves to be the wisest of men in other things in which they were not wise."

I wonder how often, in how many centuries, a famous passage in the *Iliad* has occurred to polite letter-writers. Pliny uses it in acknowledging a friend's present of some fine thrushes, a favourite dish on Roman dinner-tables. "I cannot match your gift," he writes, "with any dainty from town, as I am at my villa at Laurentum, nor from the sea in the stormy weather now prevailing. I can only, therefore, make you the churlish and barren acknowledgement of a letter;

an exchange more unequal, I confess, than that famous one of the subtle Diomed" (v. 2). Ruskin had made a present of all his books to Rossetti, who in return proposed to send him a drawing. "If you will insist," wrote Ruskin, "in having so great an advantage over me as to give me a little drawing of yours in exchange—as Glaucus gave his golden arms for Diomed's brazen ones—I shall hold it one of my most precious possessions." I suspect that Rossetti thought all this a little far-fetched. Scott thought of the passage more naturally. "Like the old heroes in Homer," he wrote in his recollections of Byron, "we exchanged gifts. I gave Byron a beautiful dagger mounted with gold, which had been the property of the redoubted Elfi Bey. But I was to play the part of Diomed in the *Iliad*, for Byron sent me, some time after, a large sepulchral vase of silver full of dead men's bones, found within the Long Walls of Athens." As between scholars, the quotation is almost irresistible. Thus in return for Munro's dedication of his famous edition of Lucretius, Kennedy dedicated his school edition of Virgil to Munro. "You have given like Glaucus in the *Iliad*; I, like the Greek Diomed, have received

χρύσεα χαλκείων, ἑκατόμβοι' ἐννεαβοίων."[1]

[1] See *Iliad*, vi. 236 and preceding lines. Pope's version is this:

Thus having said, the gallant chiefs alight,
Their hands they join, their mutual faith they plight.

Of a quotation retorted humorously upon the quoter, an admirable instance is recorded by Boswell (April 30, 1773). "I remember," said Johnson, "once being with Goldsmith in Westminster Abbey. While we surveyed the Poets' Corner I said to him,

Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis.[1]

When we got to Temple Bar he stopped me, pointed to the heads upon it, and slily whispered me,

Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur ISTIS."

The classics have often served to put off an inconvenient question. The most familiar instance in this sort is of the schoolboy's reply to Queen Elizabeth when she visited Winchester in 1574 and was inquisitive about flogging—"Infandum, regina, jubes renovare dolorem." But this story of the scholar's apt quotation in answer to the Queen's too curious question is, we are told, now

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Brave Glaucus then each narrow thought resigned
(Jove warmed his bosom and enlarged his mind):
For Diomed's brass arms, of mean device,
For which nine oxen paid (a vulgar price),
He gave his own, of gold divinely wrought;
A hundred beeves the shining purchase bought.

It may amuse the reader to compare the translation of the same passage by the author of *Erewhon* and of *The Humour of Homer*: "With these words they sprang from their chariots, grasped one another's hands, and plighted friendship. But the son of Saturn made Glaucus take leave of his wits, for he exchanged golden armour for bronze, the worth of a hundred head of cattle for the worth of nine."

[1] "Perchance our name too will be joined with them."—Ovid, *Ars. Am.* iii. 339.

somewhat discredited.[1] Another very apt use of the classics in reply to an awkward question is better authenticated. Carteret, who had been appointed Lord-Lieutenant shortly after Swift's publication of the famous *Drapier's Letters*, proceeded, on arriving in Ireland, to offer a reward for the discovery of the writer and to imprison the printer. Swift attended the first levee and asked Carteret to explain this severity against a poor industrious tradesman who had published two or three papers designed for the good of his country. Carteret, who, we are told, could have had little doubt of Swift being the real author, but was not desirous that it should be discovered, took refuge in Dido's reassuring words to the Trojans :

> Res dura et regni novitas me talia cogunt
> Moliri.[2]

A happy quotation from Virgil was "a feat," says Leslie Stephen drily, "which always seems to have brought consolation to the statesmen of that day." Carteret's feat was the more excellent because it must have been accomplished on the spur of the moment. The same speech of the queen furnished another famous quotation. Dido goes on to tell the strangers that though she is compelled to exercise caution they have nothing to fear: the

[1] *About Winchester College*, by A. K. Cook, p. 324.

[2] *Aen.* i. 563 : "My hard case and the newness of my kingdom constrain me to hold such heed."

renown of Troy is universal, and they can rely on her assistance. We Carthaginians have not minds so dull, nor do we lie so far out of the circuit of the sun, as to be indifferent to the tale of Troy. These are the lines which were used on the occasion to which I refer by a Tory to reassure a Whig. Congreve, the dramatist, had been given a commissionership of wine licences :

> Congreve spent on writing plays
> And one poor office half his days.

When the Tories came into power in 1711 it was feared that he might lose his office, and Halifax spoke to Harley on the subject. Harley, says Macaulay, who with all his faults of understanding and temper had a sincere kindness for men of genius, reassured the anxious poet by quoting, very gracefully and happily, the lines of Virgil :

> Non obtusa adeo gestamus pectora Poeni,
> Nec tam aversus eques Tyria Sol jungit ab urbe.[1]

In verifying the reference I turned up, by the way, my old school texts of the *Aeneid*. Kennedy tells me that I am to translate the second line, "Nor from the Tyrian city so remote Sol yokes his steeds," a note which, I am afraid, must have left me no wiser than I was before. Conington's note is much more to the point and full of

[1] *Aen.* i. 567.

interest, and the modern application of the lines is in keeping with his interpretation.

"There is not less wit," said Bayle, "nor less invention, in applying rightly a thought one finds in a book than in being the first author of that thought. Cardinal du Perron has been heard to say that the happy application of a verse in Virgil has deserved a talent." The saying may be applied not only in Emerson's sense—"Next to the originator of a good sentence is the first quoter of it"—but also to those who, haunted by a phrase in the classics, have given it a new meaning which henceforth lives beside the original by a sort of right of its own. In order to verify an instance which I had in mind, I turned to the pages of *Esmond*. They are as full of good Latin and Greek as some more modern novels are of bad French. Thackeray quotes, and always to good purpose, from Claudian, Herodotus, Homer, Horace, Juvenal, Ovid, and Virgil. Such free use of the old writers is proper in a book which copies the manners and language of Queen Anne's time; but, indeed, there are few works in English literature, among those which have themselves become classics, that are not richly reminiscent of the ancient writers. The particular instance for which I was looking is Thackeray's adaptation of Horace's phrase *Non omnis moriar*.[1] It was said

[1] *Odes*, iii. 30.

by Horace in literary ambition. He made a claim which posterity has confirmed: "I shall not wholly die"; his verses would survive, and while Rome stood men would tell how he rose from humble rank to greatness as the first Roman lyric poet. But who that has read the beautiful chapter of *Esmond*, in which Harry, returning from the wars, is reconciled to his mistress, does not remember Horace's words in a different sense? "Who was he, weak and friendless creature, that such love should be poured out upon him? . . . What is ambition compared to that, but selfish vanity? . . . Only true love lives after you, follows your memory with secret blessing—or precedes you, and intercedes for you. *Non omnis moriar*; if dying, I yet live in a tender heart or two; nor am lost and hopeless living, if a sainted departed soul still loves and prays for me." Thackeray deserved a talent, I think, for his happy application, or misapplication, of the poet's phrase. And, by the way, was it by a stroke of subtle art that in the same chapter he makes Tom Tusher, the chaplain, quote Horace also? "I am charmed to see Captain Esmond," says he. "My lord and I have read the *Reddas incolumem, precor* . . . My Lord Viscount, your lordship remembers *Septimi, Gades aditure mecum*?" These references were given, I like to think, as a foil; but however this may be, the instance may serve as an illustration of the use and the abuse of classical quotation. The

deeply-felt Horatian echo, written by Thackeray through the pen of his hero, shows the influence of the classics in their higher power. The references put into the mouth of Squaretoes are but the display of a pedant.

## III

## A RAMBLE IN PLINY'S LETTERS

Scholars, I believe, rate the letters of the younger Pliny as hardly worthy of mention beside those of Cicero. Dr. Middleton, in his once famous *Life of Cicero*, compared the two, and, while conceding to those of Pliny an attractive style, pronounced their contents to show "a poverty and barrenness through the whole." Pliny lived in other times and under other conditions than those which give historical and tragic significance to the letters of Cicero; and Pliny himself, as we shall see, was well aware of this difference, but there is nothing very fruitful in the kind of criticism which asks of a comedy why it was not a tragedy. But then there is the line which scholars draw between the golden and the silver age, and Pliny falls within the later period. And certainly the language of Cicero's letters shows a nervous vigour and a spontaneity for which one looks in vain in those of Pliny. But there is a compensation to the unlearned in the fact that Pliny is the easier author. Perhaps this is one reason why the

Letters of Pliny long ago became almost an English classic, whereas the wholly successful translation of Cicero's is still to seek. In the great age of English letter-writing Pliny had a remarkable vogue. The translation by William Melmoth, himself the author of letters much admired in his day, was first published in 1747, and was in a tenth edition before the eighteenth century was out. With some alterations it was revived in the Bohn's Library of the last generation ; and, again corrected and somewhat curtailed, it will continue to live in the excellent Loeb Library of to-day. Lord Orrery, the friend of Swift, had a version in preparation when Melmoth's appeared, but, undeterred, he published his book in 1751, and it also ran through several editions. Warton said that Melmoth's translation was a better work than the original. Perhaps this judgement was meant to cover some reflection upon Pliny's latinity. But it is always possible to get one scholar to contradict another, and on turning to the *Encyclopædia Britannica* I find these remarks by Professor Paley : "As a writer the younger Pliny is as graceful, fluent, and polished as the style of the elder Pliny is crabbed and obscure. Indeed, the latinity of the epistles cannot be fairly called inferior to that of Cicero himself. There are few indications of the deterioration (if progress and development in a language ought to be so called) of the Silver Age." So one

may dip into Pliny's letters and appreciate his felicities of expression without compunction. And as for the comparison on other grounds with Cicero, one may let it rest with the sound sentence of Lord Orrery: "Pliny must not die because Cicero must live: *Vivat uterque.*"

One reason why Pliny appealed so strongly to the polite circles of the eighteenth century is that he was a patron of literature. He had to the full the passionate longing of the Romans to leave a name and a memorial behind them, and he knew that, in the political conditions of the Empire, literature was his only doorway to such life after death. He is for ever keeping himself up to the mark in pursuit of that high endeavour and urging his friends to cultivate the same ambition. "Nothing so strongly affects me," he writes to Titinius Capito (v. 8), "as the desire of a lasting name: a passion highly worthy of the human breast." "Shape and fashion something," he writes to Caninius Rufus (i. 3), "that shall be really and for ever your own. All your other possessions will pass on from one master to another: this alone, when once it is yours, will for ever be so." And again to another correspondent (ii. 10): "Remember, my friend, the mortality of human nature, and that there is nothing so likely to preserve your name as a monument of this kind; all others are as frail

and perishable as the men themselves and fall and pass like them." He was not a literary recluse. He was zealous in discharge of such political and municipal duties as were within his reach ; he was a model landlord ; he built churches and founded schools. But he knew that all these things would pass away, and that through literature alone could he hope to win some share of the immortality which he predicted—assuredly for his revered master, Tully, and with a shade less of confidence for his own friend and contemporary, Tacitus.

Pliny has in some measure realised his ambition, but not in the way that he chiefly hoped, and it is this that lends an element of tragi-comedy to his letters. What he was proudest of was his speeches : it was to the composition of these, and to the polishing and re-polishing of them, that he devoted his most laborious care. A friend asked him why he did not write some historical work. He confessed that he felt attraction to such an attempt (v. 8). "Oratory and Poetry," he wrote, "meet small favour unless carried to the highest point of eloquence, but History pleases however written ; for mankind are naturally inquisitive, and information, however baldly presented, has its charms for beings who like even small talk and anecdote." He admitted the forces of some other inducements also, but he felt that the more difficult was the more compelling path

to fame. He was but nineteen when he first appeared at the Bar, and it was only now at last that he began to perceive (and that but dimly) what is essential to the perfect orator. Pliny thought that he had pleaded some very important causes, and his first and principal care must be to seek immortality by revising these speeches; for, as far as posterity is concerned, "a work that has not received the last polish counts no more than if you had never begun it." Alas! for the vanity of human wishes. Of the speeches upon which Pliny bestowed the last polish only one has survived, and that one — the Panegyric on Trajan — does not serve to place Pliny, as he seems sometimes to have hoped, in the company of Demosthenes and Cicero. Only a rare combination of abiding historical or philosophical interest with the antiseptic of style suffices to preserve political specimens of eloquence. In English there are, it has been said, only two sets of speeches which can still be read—Mr. Burke's and Lord Macaulay's. "It is our business to speak," said the most famous orator of our own day, "but the words which we speak have wings and fly away and disappear." Even before Mr. Gladstone himself had died, the truth of his remark was illustrated. An edition of his speeches in some ten volumes was projected, and two test volumes, the ninth and tenth, were put out. The latest speeches were thus issued first,

because it was supposed that they would assuredly interest the public; but it was found that the savour had already departed, the volumes fell flat, and the edition was abandoned. Forensic speeches have an even shorter life, which perhaps is one reason why those delivered in our law courts are, with some exceptions, shambling and artless performances. Among the exceptions are the speeches of Sir Edward Clarke; even those delivered by him in unsensational cases have artistic finish, and he has told us in his Autobiography that (like Pliny) he studied his art from the ancient models. But it is to be feared that no one would think it rapture could those who patiently explore the wrecks of ancient cities, or the forgotten corners of mediaeval libraries, seize some fragment of the speech for Accia Variola (vi. 33) or the other orations in cases of disputed succession on which Pliny plumed himself.

But though Pliny was not destined to obtain immortality through his speeches, they lived at least longer than a day. This survival was due to the fact that, like other orators of the time, he was able to find friends who were willing to attend private recitals of the speeches after their delivery in court-house or senate. This process is defended by Pliny at length, and with some warmth, as an indispensable preliminary to publication. "You say it is superfluous to recite a speech which has already been delivered? Yes,

if you recite it exactly as delivered, to the very same audience and immediately ; but if you make several additions and alterations, if you collect an audience composed partly of the same and partly of different persons, and after an interval, why is it less commendable to recite your speech than to publish it? . . . The reciter becomes a keener critic of his work, under the diffidence inspired by an audience; he can settle any points on which he feels doubtful by the advice of his assessors, so to speak. He has, moreover, the advantage of receiving many hints from different persons ; and, failing this, he can discover his hearers' sentiments from the air of a countenance, the turn of a head or an eye, the motion of a hand, a murmur of applause, or even silence itself—signs which will plainly enough distinguish their real judgment from the language of civility. And indeed if any one of my audience should have the curiosity to peruse the same performance which he heard me read, he may find several things altered or omitted and perhaps too upon his judgment, though he did not say a single word to me" (vii. 17, v. 3). The reader will have noted how artfully Pliny insinuates a plea for close attention on the part of his audience: he promises to the careful and appreciative listener some share in the glory of the finally polished work. It was as if Mr. Asquith, after delivering one of his memorial orations in the House of Commons, had beguiled a party of

friends,—some Members of Parliament, with Mr. Gosse and other literary assessors,—to assemble in Cavendish Square in order to hear him recite a revised version of the oration before he sent it to Messrs. Macmillan. Or, to take if possible a still more incredible case, who can imagine Sir Edward Carson or Sir John Simon or Sir Edward Clarke repeating to a private party of friends some harangue already delivered in the law courts? I fancy that emphatic language would have been heard if it had been suggested to the late Lord Russell of Killowen to make a display in this sort of the famous peroration, tears and all, in which he spoke "not as an advocate, I speak for the land of my birth." This, however, is what was done at Rome, and perhaps after all it is only that fashion has changed the kind of subject-matter chosen for private recital. The following description is by no means out of date: "The greater part of the audience which is collected upon these occasions seat themselves in passages, spend the time of the recitation in talk, and send in every now and then to inquire whether the author is come in, whether he has read the preface, or whether he has nearly finished the piece. Not till then, and even then with the utmost deliberation, they just look in, and withdraw again before the end, some by stealth, and others without ceremony" (i. 13). He may be accounted fortunate who has never witnessed, or himself guiltily

enacted, such a scene in London drawing-rooms. Or, to take another case, perhaps a Roman would have thought a week's attendance at the reading of papers before a Social Science Congress as incredible as we find a three days' session while Pliny recited over again to a party of friends his panegyric upon Trajan. The thing actually happened: we have Pliny's word for it (iii. 18). He was immensely pleased; and, as one good turn deserves another, we are not surprised to hear in another letter (iv. 27) that he attended a friend's recital of verses for three days running. Poetical recitals were serious affairs; for, when the courts were not sitting and Pliny substituted a recital of some of his verses, he tells us that he provided his guests with writing-desks (viii. 21): apparently they were expected to jot down selected gems or to make notes of suggested emendations. It was a serious business in another way. Pliny fancied himself a good deal as a reciter of his orations, but had to admit that he was an indifferent reader of poetry. He decided accordingly to have his poems read for him by one of his secretaries. But the perplexing question is, he wrote, in asking for a friend's advice (ix. 34), "How shall I behave while he is reading? Shall I sit silent in a fixed and indolent posture, or follow him as he pronounces, with my eyes, hands, and voice — a manner which some practise?" The manner is not unknown among the guests at musical

parties in our own times. Let us hope that Pliny's friend advised him to avoid it. Just as there are hostesses among us who specialise in musicians, or minor poets, or professors of "the new thought," so there seem to have been hosts at Rome who laid themselves out for entertaining friends at recitals. In writing to decline an invitation, Pliny explains that he is already engaged. "Titinius Capito is going to recite, and I know not whether it is more my inclination or my duty to hear him. He is a man of a most amiable disposition, and justly to be numbered among the brightest ornaments of our age. He cultivates the polite arts himself, and encourages them in others. To many authors he is a haven, a refuge, a resting-place; to all, a model. His house is at the disposal of every one who wishes to give a recital" (viii. 12). Nothing shocked Pliny more than any exhibition of impatience or other lack of appreciation at these literary parties: it was at once an offence against good manners and a slight to the Dignity of Literature or Oratory. "I cannot forbear," he writes to a friend (vi. 17), "to pour out before you in a letter, since I have no opportunity of doing so in person, the little fit of anger I was taken with at a recital in a friend's house. The composition read to us was a highly finished performance; but there were two or three persons among the audience, men of eloquence in their own and a few others' estimation, who sate

like so many deaf-mutes without so much as moving a lip or hand, or once rising to their feet." It should be understood that at these recitations to rise to your feet was a mark not of impatience but of applause: the audiences used to rise to express their admiration of the reciter, and kissed their hands to him. Can it be that Pliny's anger was due to some fellow-feeling with the unappreciated reciter, or at any rate to an uneasy feeling that what happened to one reciter might some day happen to himself? It is clear from this letter, and from another already quoted, that even in Pliny's circle these recitals were sometimes treated as a bore. "It was not thus," he says (i. 13), "in the time of our fathers." We wonder. We know that the Romans were like brothers in the brave days of old; but even in the most fraternal coteries there must always have been those who, tempted to yawn, needed to bear in mind the exhortation which George Herbert gives to those who attend recitals from the pulpit:

> The worst speak something good; if all want sense,
> God takes a text, and preacheth patience.

It is refreshing to find that Pliny in his serious pre-occupation with these things did not altogether lose a sense of humour. "You were not present," he writes to a friend (vi. 15), "at a very droll accident which lately happened; neither was I, but I had an early account of it. Passennus Paulus,

a distinguished Roman knight and an eminently learned man, has a turn for elegiac poetry, a talent which runs in the family, for he is a fellow-townsman of Propertius, and even reckons that poet among his ancestors. He was lately reciting a poem which began thus :

Priscus, thou dost command—

whereupon Iavolenus Priscus (who was present, being one of his particular friends) cried out : 'But I don't command.' Think what laughter, what sallies, this occasioned! The sanity of Priscus is doubtful ; yet he enters into common offices of life, is called to consultations, and acts as a civil pleader, so that this behaviour was the more remarkable and ridiculous. Meanwhile Paulus has to thank the craziness of another for a somewhat cool reception. So you see, intending reciters cannot look too carefully, not only to their own sanity, but to that of the audience they invite." Two of the editors[1] think that Pliny is here too severe, and they enter a plea in defence of Priscus. "As he was a jurist of great eminence, his alleged craziness was probably no more than absent-mindedness. Thus aroused from a reverie by hearing his own name he makes a ludicrous reply." I sympathise with Priscus, but in Pliny's eyes to take a nap at a recital was unpardonable,

[1] Church and Brodribb.

and he would have said that the defence of the sanity of Priscus was made at the expense of his manners. However, perhaps Pliny was only cracking his little joke, and we may pass on after remembering some of the interruptions made in the rehearsal of the tragedy in *The Critic*.

Pliny had some further hope, though not, it would seem, quite so confident as in the case of his speeches, of being remembered by his poetry. But in poetry the second-rate does not count, and it was unreasonable to suppose that so many poets as Pliny seems to have admired would survive. The Rome of his day was, if he is to be trusted, a very nest of singing birds. A modern reviewer is not more lavish in proclamation of new poets or great novels than was Pliny in predicting immortal fame for each new effort of his literary friends. "I will not hesitate," he says (i. 16), "to place Pompeius Saturninus in the same rank with any of the ancients. I fancied I was hearing Plautus or Terence. Had he flourished in some distant age, not only his works, but the very pictures and statues of him would have been passionately inquired after; and shall we then, from a sort of satiety, and merely because he is present among us, suffer his talents to languish?" "Your lips drop honey," he writes to Arrius Antoninus (iv. 3), "and one would imagine the bee had diffused her sweetness over all you compose. These were the sentiments I had when I lately read your Greek

epigrams and mimes. I fancied I had got in my hands Callimachus or Herodas, or, if possible, some poet even superior to these." And again to the same friend (v. 15): "I am never more sensible of the excellence of your verses than when I endeavour to imitate them. As the hand of the painter must nearly always fail when perfect beauty sits for the picture, so I labour to catch the graces of this original and still fall short of them."

In turning his high-flown compliments, Pliny must be suspected, I fear, of hoping to receive them back with usury. The literary vanity of the man appears in many a page of the *Letters* with a frank naïveté that disarms offence. In praising the poems of Augurinus for their delicacy and elegance, and their propriety of sentiments, he admits (iv. 27) that "the praises he bestows upon me may bias my judgment, for he has made it the subject of an epigram that I sometimes amuse myself with writing verses." So again a play by Vergilius Romanus is extolled for its strength, majesty, delicacy, softness, poignancy and wit, and then he goes on: "He makes use of feigned names with great propriety, of real ones with much justness. With respect only to myself, I should say he has erred through an excess of good-will, if I did not know that fiction is the privilege of poets" (vi. 21). Whether Rome was a nest of singing birds or not, we cannot doubt that

it was the seat of coteries of literary log-rollers. In which respect the literary world changes not from age to age:

> Our tuneful race the selfsame madness goads:
> My friend writes elegies, and I write odes:
> O how we puff each other! "'Tis divine;
> The Muses had a hand in every line."
> Remark our swagger as we pass the dome
> Built to receive the future bards of Rome;
> Then follow us and listen what we say,
> How each in turn awards and takes the bay.
> Like Samnite fencers, with elaborate art
> We hit in tierce to be hit back in quart.
> I'm dubbed Alcaeus, and retire in force:
> And who is he? Callimachus of course;
> Or, if 'tis not enough, I bid him rise
> Mimnermus, and he swells to twice his size.[1]

Pliny was hugely flattered when Martial wrote an epigram on him and hardly less when Augurinus followed suit. These friendly poets knew his weak spot. He was a public man of conspicuous probity, a moralist, a student of serious subjects, in all respects a *vir pietate gravis*. But as such men often do, he liked to pass among certain intimates as one who was not above relaxing on occasion and who, when he chose, could be as gay a dog as any of them. Therefore it was that Martial in his piece on Pliny boasted that "even rigid Catos read my wanton lays," and that Augurinus bespoke indulgence for his love poems

[1] Horace, *Epistles*, ii. 2, Conington's version.

on the score of Pliny's example. The great man himself in more than one letter at once proclaims and excuses the freedom of his verses. He is always great on precedents, and he produces for the discomfiture of a disapproving friend a long string of illustrious men who had amused themselves with writing light verses (v. 3). The poems of Pliny have not survived, but I suspect that they were not so naughty as he paints them.

Was it some subconscious presentiment that neither his poetical "amusements" (as he called them) nor his speeches (which he regarded so seriously) might survive to posterity that led him to construct a third line of defence against oblivion by preparing letters for publication? His correspondence with Trajan which was published after Pliny's death stands in a class by itself. By the preservation of this correspondence (in Book x. of the *Letters*) Pliny has attained his ambition in writing history (in the narrower sense), or at any rate in supplying materials for it. The letters written by Pliny as Imperial legate with the Emperor's replies are a leading authority on Provincial Administration under the Empire, and with two of the letters—those on the Christians—every one who has read any Church history is familiar. What is of general interest in the other letters (more than a hundred in number) is the

light they throw on the great mass of detail with which a conscientious Roman Emperor allowed himself to be concerned. It has been said that Sir Robert Peel was the last of British Prime Ministers who was able or willing to be master of the business of each and all of the departments; but unless Pliny's case was wholly exceptional, the burden of work which Peel sustained must have been greatly exceeded by that of Trajan. Not only questions of general policy, but details of finance, of administration, of public works, of municipal government, and military affairs even on the smallest scale, were referred by Pliny to the Emperor's advice or decision. In most cases Trajan's answers show that careful consideration was given, and his decisions seem, so far as a modern reader can judge, to have been sensible, liberal, and humane. In one matter he would be reckoned by modern democrats among the reactionaries. He had a rooted horror of trade unions. In making a progress through his province Pliny came upon a city which had suffered greatly from a fire; there was no local fire brigade, and not even a single engine or bucket was available for public service. He proposed to institute a guild of firemen, not to exceed 150 members, and he undertook to see that the privileges granted to them should not be diverted to any other purpose. Trajan would not hear of it. "Whatever title we give them," he wrote, "men who are banded

together for a common end will all the same become a political association before long" (x. 33, 34). On another occasion Pliny asked whether he might allow meetings of mutual benefit societies to be held. In this case it appeared that the city in question had local autonomy guaranteed to it by treaty. "This being so, we cannot oppose it," said Trajan, "especially if their contributions are employed, not for the purpose of riot and faction, but for the support of the indigent. In other cities, however, which are subject to our laws, I would have all societies of this nature prohibited" (x. 92, 93). The restriction of local autonomy was doubtless a mistake of the Empire, but modern experience supports Trajan's view that trade unions are wont to transcend the charitable objects with which they start. No question seems to have been too small for the Emperor's attention. He had advice to give on aqueducts, baths, canals, even in inconsiderable cities in a distant province; the movement of even a couple of troopers from one place to another exercised his mind. Pliny, on his side, showed the most detailed concern for the welfare of every city in his province. There is an earlier letter in which he gives advice to a friend who was going out to govern Greece (viii. 24). It is worth reading even by pro-consuls to-day. "Cherish," he said, "sentiments of respect for their antiquity, their achievements, their legends. Let no man's dignity,

liberty, or vanity suffer the least diminution at your hands. Far be pride and asperity from my friend; nor fear that a proper condescension can breed contempt." What Pliny preached he seems to have practised, and he did not hesitate to solicit the Emperor's personal help whenever there was work of public benefit or municipal adornment to be done. In particular he more than once begged that architects and surveyors might be sent out to him from Rome. Here Trajan felt that Pliny was asking too much. "As for surveyors," he wrote, "I have scarce enough, my dear Pliny, for the works which I am carrying on at Rome and in the neighbourhood; but trustworthy persons of this class may be found in every province, so that you will have no lack of such if you choose to make diligent inquiry" (x. 18). And again: "You must decide for yourself how best to advise the Claudiopolitani with reference to their bath, which they have placed, you say, in a very inconvenient situation. You cannot be in want of architects, as there is no province that is not furnished with men of skill and ingenuity; pray do not imagine it is your quickest way to get them from Rome, for it is usually from Greece that they come hither" (x. 40). The Emperor was always polite and friendly in answering Pliny, but sometimes, it will be seen, he allowed it to appear plainly enough that he would be better pleased if his legate decided things for himself. "I made

choice of your prudence," he wrote on one occasion, "expressly that you might take your own measures for regulating the affairs and settling the peace of this province" (x. 117). The Emperor's dear Pliny was just a shade too anxious to have his master's approval in advance.

These official letters, as said already, were published posthumously. It was his familiar letters that Pliny himself put out and by which perhaps he hoped to be remembered. If so, he was well advised. Even if chance had preserved his other works, his poems were no great things and his speeches would not have been read to-day. But his *Letters* belong to a kind of literature that the world does not willingly let die. We must, it is true, make one reservation. The *Letters* of Pliny have not the charm of spontaneity. They were written with a view to publication. He goes very near to telling us so himself in the first letter of the collection. "You have frequently pressed me," he says to Septicius, "to collect and publish such of my letters as may show some literary polish. I have accordingly done so . . . and it only remains to hope that you may not repent of your advice nor I of my compliance. If so, I may inquire after the rest which now lie neglected, and not withhold those which I shall hereafter write." This is plain warning that he meant to write for publication. Such avowal is,

according to many critics of the art, fatal to the charm of letters. "Montaigne says that if he could have excelled in any kind of writing it would have been in letters; but I doubt they would not have been natural, for it is plain that all Pliny's letters were written with a view to publishing, and I accuse Voiture himself of the same crime, although he is an author I am fond of. They cease to be letters when they become a *jeu d'esprit.*" So wrote Swift to Pope, and I need not say that the advice was not taken. It were well for Pope's fame if a view to publishing had been the only "crime" chargeable to his account for the conduct and manipulation of his letters. Cowper thanked his stars that he was saved from becoming "as disgusting a letter-writer as Pope, who seems to have thought that unless a sentence was well-turned, and every period pointed with some conceit, it was not worth the carriage. Accordingly he is to me, except in very few instances, the most disagreeable maker of epistles I ever met with." Cowper, whose own letters are called by Leslie Stephen the best in the English language, showed the more excellent way in the art, but the taste for studied letter-writing existed in Pliny's time as in Pope's, and we must take it as an accepted literary convention. What, however, gives charm to Pliny's *Letters* is not their form, though indeed his style is smooth and graceful, but the true instinct that he shows for what is of abiding

interest. He did, indeed, hedge a little. His model was Cicero, and he knew that letters could not in his day have the same scope as in Cicero's. A friend had written to ask for longer and more frequent letters. Pliny makes various excuses, and adds: "Besides I had not sufficient matter for frequent letters; and am by no means in the same situation that Tully was, whom you point out to me as an example. He not only possessed a most enlarged genius, but the times wherein he lived furnished a variety of noble occasions for exercising it. As for myself, you know without my telling you to what narrow limits I am confined" (ix. 2). Nevertheless he hankered after presenting some political abstract of the times in which he played his part. We see this from an apology with which he ends a long and a not very interesting letter about a debate in the Senate on vote by ballot (iii. 20): "Why," he asks, "should our letters for ever turn upon petty domestic concerns? It is true, indeed, the direction of the public weal is in the hands of a single person, who, for the general good, takes upon himself alone to ease us of the care and weight of government; but still that bountiful source of power permits by a very wholesome dispensation some streams to flow down to us; and these we may not only imbibe ourselves, but, as it were, administer them by letter to our absent friends." But for the most part he left these

political matters aside, and concerned himself with the everyday life of himself and his friends. "Like our own Horace Walpole," as Sir Samuel Dill well says, "he had the keen sense to see that social routine could be made interesting, and that the man who had the skill to do so might make himself famous."[1] How much of interest may be drawn out from his account of his friends may be seen from the chapter entitled "The Circle of the Younger Pliny" in the book just quoted. But Pliny himself remains at the centre of the circle, and the letters are in some sort an autobiography.

The character of Pliny drawn by himself has many engaging qualities. Lord Orrery added to his translation of the *Letters* "An Essay on Pliny's Life addressed to Charles Lord Boyle," and in this he pictures Pliny as a model of what a father would wish his son to be. "The author who is now placed before you in our own language is a most singular instance of that primitive simplicity, that integrity of manners, and that sweetness of disposition which must render a man amiable to his contemporaries, and honoured and admired by all posterity." "He was equally the faithful servant of the empire, of the people, and of the prince." "In the various stations of private life, he discharged every duty with piety and exactness; he was an affectionate, endearing husband, an unalterable

[1] *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 161.

and a courageous friend ; to his servants, a tender and careful master ; to his associates, an easy and often a facetious companion : grave without severity, witty without ill-nature, open without impudence ; he was, my Charles, what I wish you may be, a splendid original whom few can copy but whom all ought to imitate." A modern reader of the *Letters* will be inclined, I think, to lower Lord Orrery's note a little, but substantially his estimate of Pliny's life and character may be accepted. He belonged both on his father's and on his mother's side to the provincial nobility. In a letter recommending a tutor to a friend (iii. 3), he writes : "Your son will hear nothing from this worthy man but what will be for his advantage to know, nor learn anything of which it would be fitter he should be ignorant. He will represent to him, as often and with as much zeal as you or I should, what a glorious weight of ancestral reputation he has to support—*quibus imaginibus oneretur, quae nomina et quanta sustineat.*" Pliny's words have been cited as a classical parallel of *Noblesse oblige.* He was keenly alive to the obligations of rank and riches. He was, it is true, too vain, and he has been accused not unfairly of priggishness, but he was amiable and it is impossible to read the *Letters* without becoming interested in him and his affairs.

His enthusiasm about his villas, for instance, will be found contagious by most readers of the

*Letters*. One interesting point is the large number of his homes. Plutarch relates of Lucullus the magnificent that he was blamed by Pompey for having made his villa at Tusculum commodious only for the summer and absolutely uninhabitable in the winter. Lucullus smiled, as rich men do at the simplicity of common folk, and answered, "What, then, do you think I have not so much sense as the cranes and the storks which change their habitations with the seasons?" Pliny, who was rich but had none of the extravagant tastes of Lucullus, might have changed his habitation almost with every month. Cicero had some half-dozen villas, Pliny nine or ten. The number of country seats possessed by well-to-do Romans in the latter days of the Republic and during the Empire is astonishing. It has been ascribed, and in some cases no doubt truly, to the ennui which Lucretius has described in a passage of sombre power and for which, with the naïveté of an enthusiast, he advised as a cure a study of the laws of nature.[1] The jaded Roman voluptuary would, it may be

[1] Book iii. 1053-1075. If men took the poet's advice, "they would not spend their life as we see them now for the most part do, not knowing any one of them what he means and wanting ever change of place as though he might lay his burden down. The man who is sick of home often issues forth from his large mansion, and as suddenly comes back to it, finding as he does that he is no better off abroad. He races to his country-house, driving his jennets in headlong haste, as if hurrying to a house on fire: he yawns the moment he has reached the door of his house, or sinks heavily into sleep, or even in haste goes back again to town," etc. (Munro's translation).

feared, have voted the cure as bad as the disease :

> In his cool hall, with haggard eyes,
> The Roman noble lay ;
> He drove abroad, in furious guise,
> Along the Appian Way.
> He made a feast, drank fierce and fast,
> And crowned his hair with flowers—
> No easier nor no quicker passed
> The impracticable hours.

But Pliny did not suffer from ennui. He was almost as industrious as his incredibly laborious uncle, of whom he tells us (iii. 5) that his working day began at one or two in the morning, and that he transacted business with the Emperor Vespasian before daybreak. The younger Pliny certainly did not keep up his many villas as a relief against boredom. He was never bored—except, perhaps, when as a country gentleman ought—and Pliny always did the proper thing—he went out for a day's sport, and then he combined a more with a less congenial occupation. He confesses it in a letter to Tacitus (i. 6) : "Certainly you will laugh (and laugh you may) when I tell you that your old acquaintance has taken three noble boars. What! Pliny? Yes, even he. However, I indulged at the same time my beloved quiet, and whilst I sat at my nets, you would have found me, not with spear and dart, but pen and tablets by my side. I mused and wrote, being resolved if I

returned with my hands empty, at least to come home with my note-book full. Believe me, this manner of studying is not to be despised; it is wonderful how greatly bodily exercise contributes to enliven the imagination. Besides, the sylvan solitude with which one is surrounded, and the very silence which is observed on these occasions, strongly incline the mind to meditation." Here, as might be expected from an Irish peer, Lord Orrery has a word of criticism for his hero. "A thoroughbred fox-hunter" would not think much, we are told, of Pliny as a sportsman. He would not indeed. But Izaac Walton would have understood him, for "Piscator" uses in defence of his chosen sport the same argument that Pliny applies to shooting: "it is a recreation that invites to contemplation and quietness."

Why, then, did Pliny and others of his circle keep so many country houses? Something may be attributed, as Sir Samuel Dill suggests, to the obligation imposed on senators to invest a third of their fortune in Italian land, but another student of these times makes a different and perhaps a more cogent suggestion. "Every man had to provide his own health resort in those days," says Mr. Warde Fowler; "there was nothing to correspond to the modern hotel. . . . There being no hotels, among which the change-loving Roman of Cicero's day could pick and choose a retreat for a holiday, he would buy a site for a villa first in one place,

then in another, or purchase one ready built or transform an old farmhouse of his own into a residence 'with modern requirements.'"[1] Pliny himself says something of the kind. He was debating with a friend whether to add to an existing estate or to buy a new one. "I don't know," he says (iii. 19), "whether it is prudent to venture so much of one's property under the same climate: besides, there is something very amusing in shifting the scene and travelling from one estate to another." So, then, in tracing Pliny from villa to villa, we may in some sort liken him to the well-to-do traveller of our own times who winters now at this Palace Hotel on the Riviera and now at that, or who goes for spring sunshine to a Grand Hotel now on Como and now on Maggiore.

It has been suggested that the changeful life implied in so many villas as Cicero or Pliny possessed is the reason of a certain lack of depth in the literary productions of their times. The idea may naturally occur to the fellow of a college at one of our ancient universities. "Real thought, the working out of great problems of philosophy or politics, is impossible," we are told, "under constant change of scene and without the opportunity of forming regular habits. . . . The life of the average wealthy man was too comfortable, too changeable, to suggest the desirability of real mental

[1] *Social Life at Rome in the Age of Cicero*, p. 249.

exertion."[1] I recall the beautiful passage, worthy to be set beside one of Newman's, in which another scholar "thanks the members, present and past, of the Council of Trinity College, who, by thrice prolonging my Fellowship, have enabled me, free from sordid care, to pass my days 'in the calm and still air of delightful studies' amid surroundings of all others the most congenial to learning. The windows of my study look on the tranquil court of an ancient college, where the sundial marks the silent passage of the hours and in the long summer days the fountain plashes drowsily amid flowers and grass; where, as the evening shadows deepen, the lights come out in the blazoned windows of the Elizabethan hall and from the chapel the sweet voices of the choir, blent with the pealing music of the organ, float on the peaceful air, telling of man's eternal aspirations after truth and goodness and immortality. Here if anywhere, remote from the tumult and bustle of the world with its pomps and vanities and ambitions, the student may hope to hear the still voice of truth, to penetrate through the little transitory questions of the hour to the realities which abide, or rather which we fondly think must abide, while the generations come and go. I cannot be too thankful that I have been allowed to spend so many quiet and happy years in such a scene, and when I quit my old college rooms, as I soon shall do, for another home at

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 259, 260.

Cambridge, I shall hope to carry forward to new work in a new scene the love of study and labour which has been, not indeed implanted, but fostered and cherished in this ancient home of learning and peace." The editor of Pausanias and author of *The Golden Bough* is entitled to say all this, but power of intellectual energy and literary industry are not always conditioned by the same surroundings. There have been men nurtured in the calm and still air of delightful studies who have been "barren rascals" after all, whilst many a work of depth and moment has been produced amid every surrounding of seeming disadvantage. In our own day we know this from the Life and Autobiography of the historian of the Italian Renaissance.[1] And, to take a more famous example, the works of Erasmus, which assuredly were not deficient either in real thought or in laborious research, were for the most part written, as Froude describes, on the wing. "He was no stationary scholar confined to desk or closet. He was out in

[1] "It has been my constant habit for many years to do a considerable amount of hard study while travelling. It would be difficult to say how many heavy German and Italian books on history, biography, and criticism, how many volumes of Greek poets, and what a library of French and English authors, have been slowly perused by me in railway stations, trains, steamers, wayside inns, and Alpine châlets. I enjoy nothing more than to sit in a bar-room among peasants, carters, and postilions, smoking, with a glass of wine beside me, and a stiff work on one of the subjects I am bound to get up. The contrast between the surroundings and the study adds zest to the latter, and when I am tired of reading I can lay my book down and chat with folk I have been half-consciously observing" ("A Page of My Life," by J. A. Symonds, in the *Fortnightly Review*, Dec. 1889). The habits of Erasmus, *mutatis mutandis*, must have been the same.

the world, travelling from city to city, doubtful in what country to find rest or shelter." The fact in this matter seems to be that the application of sustained thought to literary production depends less on outward circumstances than on force of character, and it often happens that

> Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille,
> Sich ein Charakter in dem Strom der Welt.

One thing, however, puzzles me about the literary life of the many-housed and much-travelling Romans. Where did Pliny keep his books? In an account of his Tuscan villa (v. 6) he describes a suite of apartments surrounding a small court which was shaded by plane trees, and Mr. Mackail suggests that a Greek inscription found at Herculaneum,[1] which speaks of "books by the plane trees" and of consecration to the Muses, may have been for a library opening on to a court such as Pliny describes. But Pliny himself does not tell us. In describing his house at Laurentum he mentions a room in which there was contrived a cupboard in the wall like a bookcase, "which contains a collection of such authors as can never be read too often" (ii. 17). But where was his principal library, and what did he do about books when he moved from one villa to another? And how is this matter managed by our own rich literary men of many homes? Do they duplicate or

[1] *C.I.G.* 6186, No. 1 in Section 4 of Mackail's *Select Epigrams*.

triplicate their Libraries in London, in Scotland, and in Surrey, it may be, or Buckinghamshire? Or do their books travel with them? The latter was probably the case with the learned Romans of Pliny's circle. It has been pointed out that in the first centuries of the Roman Empire convenience of travel reached a completeness never attained before and never attained afterwards till quite modern times.[1] Pliny gives some curious particulars about the journeys of his uncle. The elder Pliny was, by the way, another instance of an industrious author who did not enjoy repose in quiet cloisters, though, to be sure, he was rather a compiler than an original thinker. His life was passed in civil and military service in many parts of the Empire, but he was also the most learned and prolific writer of his day. He had amazing industry and application. "While he was being rubbed and wiped in the bath, he was employed," the nephew tells us, "either in hearing some book read to him, or in dictating himself. In his journeys, as though released from all other cares, he found leisure for this sole pursuit. A shorthand writer with book and tablets constantly attended him in his chariot. For the same reason my uncle always used a sedan chair in Rome. I remember he once reproved me for walking: you might, he said, not have lost those hours"

[1] See an interesting essay on *Travel in the First Century after Christ*, by Caroline A. J. Skeel (Cambridge, 1901).

(iii. 5). The travelling carriage with the short-hand writer in attendance was paralleled in pre-war days by the typewriting cars on our long-distance trains. Wealthy Romans often had their travelling coaches elaborately ornamented. Pliny no doubt devoted his care to ingenious contrivances for his literary work. An author of our own day, who did a large part of his work on the road, has described how much depended on "the cunning design and distribution of store-cellars under the seats, secret drawers under front windows, invisible pockets under padded lining, safe from dust, and accessible only by insidious slits," and finally on boots spacious enough to take a library of books of reference.[1] But the best-known instance of a travelling library is Napoleon's. "We read," says Lord Rosebery, "of him tearing along to join his armies, his coach full of books and pamphlets which would be flung out of the window when he had run through them. When he travelled with Josephine, all the newest books were put into the carriage for her to read to him. And though he declared that his reading was purely practical, he always had a travelling library of general literature, with which he took great pains."

Convenience of access was one of the attractions of Pliny's seaside villa at Laurentum, south of Ostia. "It was," he says (ii. 17), "but 17 miles from Rome, so that having finished your affairs in

[1] Ruskin, *Praeterita*, vol. i. §§ 30, 123, vol. ii. § 135.

town you can spend the night here after completing a full working day." Another and a larger estate was in Tuscany, near the town of Tifernum-upon-the-Tiber, at the foot of the Apennines. Of these two seats he has given descriptions which are of interest to antiquarians as the leading authority on Roman country houses (ii. 17, v. 6). They seem to have been rambling places built more for convenience and to suit successive whims of the owner than with regard to architectural symmetry. Little is said of interior decorations, but what we are told is in keeping with Italian taste to this day. One of the rooms had its side covered with marble up to the cornice, and, on the frieze above, foliage was painted with birds perched among the branches. Pliny's account of his grounds would fit many an Italian garden of to-day, with its terraces adorned with rows of box trees cut into various shapes, its semicircular benches of white marble, its fountains and pillars. I notice as a point of interest that nothing is said of any flowers in Pliny's pleasaunces other than roses and violets.

"I prefer my Tuscan villa," he says, "to those which I possess at Tusculum, Tiber, and Praeneste. I there enjoy a securer and more profound leisure; I never need put on full dress; nobody calls from next door on urgent business." But he was also fond of villas which he possessed on the lake of Como, his birthplace, and what he says about these

is of the more interest to modern readers, because the country is familiar to most travellers and the sites may be conjectured.

There is a passage in one of the letters which has been a godsend to inn-keepers and boatmen, and a pleasant puzzle to scholarly tourists. "I have several villas," Pliny said to Romanus (ix. 7), "upon the lake of Como, but there are two particularly which give me most delight and employment. They are both situated in the manner of those at Baiae; one of them stands upon a rock, and overlooks the lake; the other touches it. The first, supported as it were by the lofty buskin, I call my Tragedy; the other, as resting upon the humble sock, my Comedy. Each has its peculiar beauties, and recommends itself the more to their owner by mere force of contrast. The former enjoys a wider, the latter a nearer prospect of the lake. One of them follows the gentle curve of a single bay; the other is perched on a high ridge and divides two bays. *Here* you have a straight alley extending itself along the shore; *there*, a spacious terrace that falls by a gentle descent towards it. The former does not perceive the force of the waves; the latter breaks them. From *that* you see the fishermen at work below; from *this* you may fish yourself and throw your line out of your chamber, and almost as you lie in bed as out of a boat. It is the beauties these agreeable villas possess that tempt me to add to them those

which are wanting." A possible clue to the sites of these villas is to be found in a letter (iv. 30) addressed to Licinius Sura, chief of the staff in Trajan's Dacian campaigns. "I have brought you," wrote Pliny, "as a fairing from my home-country a problem worthy of your profound erudition. There is a spring which rises in the mountain, and running among the rocks is received into a little artificial dining-room, from whence, after being detained a short time, it falls into the lake. The nature of the spring is extremely surprising; it ebbs and flows by regular amounts three times a day. The increase and decrease can be plainly observed and under very delightful conditions. You recline by the side of the fountain, and whilst you are taking a repast, and drinking its water too (for it is extremely cool), you see it rise and fall by fixed and measured gradations. If you place a ring or anything else on the dry margin, the stream reaches it by degrees till it is entirely covered, and then again gently retires from it; and this you may see it do if you prolong your watch for three times successively." And Pliny goes on to suggest various explanations between which his learned friend is invited to decide. From this letter some have supposed that you had only to find an intermittent spring on the shores of the lake in order to fix the site of one of Pliny's villas. The spring was found long ago. On the eastern shore, in an angle shaded from the morning

and midday sun, at the foot of a high cliff swept by a cascade, there is a spring, precisely such as Pliny describes, within the precincts of a gloomy old palace, to which the name Villa Pliniana has been given. The spring flows out of a cleft in a rock into the courtyard of the villa, beneath which it falls into the lake. The cave into which it first issues might well be Pliny's *cenatiuncula manu facta* or artificial dining-room. A pedestrian may reach the place by the coast road from Nesso, or the steamer will set you down at Palanzo almost at the gates. The palazzo was built in 1570 by Count Giovanni Anguissola, Governor of Como, who there sought, but it is said did not find, repose after a stormy life. It may well be the place described by Pliny. But the letter does not seem to me to suggest that Pliny was describing one of his own villas; it reads rather as a description of a show-place which he had visited. And a show-place it remains to this day. "The water is slightly magnesian," says Mr. Lund in his pleasant book on *Como and Italian Lakeland*, "and is highly prized in the neighbourhood for its medicinal qualities. In the warm summer days many parties picnic here in a fashion after Pliny's own heart." The villa has associations with other famous persons than Pliny. It was the home at one time of the Princess Belgiojoso, one of the great ladies of the Italian *risorgimento*, whose remarkable life and character have been studied by

Henry James and George Meredith ;[1] and in 1818 the palace had attracted the vagrant fancy of Shelley. "The finest scenery," he wrote to Peacock in describing a visit to Como, "is that of the Villa Pliniana ; so called from a fountain which ebbs and flows every three hours, described by the younger Pliny, which is in the courtyard. This house, which was once a magnificent palace and is now half in ruins, we are endeavouring to procure. It is built upon terraces raised from the bottom of the lake, together with its garden, at the foot of a semicircular precipice overshadowed by profound forests of chesnut. The scene from the colonnade is the most extraordinary, at once, and the most lovely, that eye ever beheld. On one side is the mountain, and immediately over you are clusters of cypress trees of an astonishing height, which seem to pierce the sky. Above you, from among the clouds, as it were, descends a waterfall of immense size, broken by the woody rocks into a thousand channels to the lake. On the other side is seen the blue extent of the lake and the mountains, speckled with sails and spires. The apartments of the Pliniana are immensely large, but ill-furnished and antique. The terraces which overlook the lake, and conduct under the shade of such immense laurel trees as deserve the epithet of Pythian, are most delightful."[2] I gather from all

[1] See G. M. Trevelyan's *Garibaldi's Defence of the Roman Republic*, p. 198 *n.*

[2] *Essays, Letters from Abroad, Translations and Fragments*, 1840, vol. ii. p. 117.

this that the Villa Pliniana was, in Shelley's time at least, one of those picturesque places which are best for somebody else to live in, and it was probably a good thing for the comfort of the Shelley *ménage* that his negotiations for taking a lease of the villa fell through.

Pliny's own villas were in his time models of comfort, we may be sure. Where are we to place them? A mistake in some of the guide-books must be cleared out of the way at the start. Such or such a place is identified, they tell us, with the site of Pliny's villa, "which from its sombre situation he called Tragedia." He did nothing of the sort, but guide-book makers have a bad habit of copying from each other without verifying their references. What is wanted for the site of Tragedy is not a gloomy spot but a rocky terrace jutting out into the lake. Paolo Giovio, who wrote a *Descriptio Larii Lacus* in 1559, assumed without hesitation that Bellagio was the site, but Pliny's description (though in some respects it fits the spot) does not seem to me to suggest that promontory from which the outlook is over three rather than two bays: moreover Bellagio would have been in a less accessible situation than Pliny is likely to have chosen for one of his favourite retreats. There are many little headlands nearer to Como that fit the description of his "Tragedy." "Without a doubt," says Giovio, "we fix at Lenno the site of the

villa which Pliny used to call Comedy," and this conjecture is supported by the fact that when the lake is very low the ruins of a Roman villa may be seen beneath the water not far from the shore. As Pliny had other villas besides his "Tragedy" and "Comedy," there is plenty of scope as one rows about the lake for finding possible sites. "How fares Como," Pliny wrote to his friend Rufus (i. 3), "that favourite scene of yours and mine? How is the charming villa, the ever-vernal portico, the shady avenue of planes, the strait (*euripus*), green and jewelled, the lake stretching below to await your orders, the promenade so soft and firm, the rooms for the many and the few, the chambers for midday siesta and midnight sleep?" In this passage Pliny is supposed to refer to the narrow reach of water called Zocca del Olio (Bay of Oil), between the shore and the Island of Comacina, "so serenely sheltered as to be almost always a mirror of surrounding glories" (*euripus gemmeus*). The centuries pass, but natural features and man's pleasure in them remain the same. Pliny's description of the Roman villas of his day fits equally well many a Milanese villa on this olive-fringed strait.

The mention of the Island of Comacina suggests in a roundabout way another of Pliny's letters. It was in this island that the "Magistri Comacini" took refuge during the incursion of Alboin. The Lombardic school of building was

originally Comasque, says Ruskin ; and the masons of Como were long famous throughout North Italy. To what were the special skill and science of natives of Como due? Can it have been the independent school which Pliny founded there? He explained his scheme in a very interesting letter (iv. 13) to his friend Tacitus, whose good offices he sought in the recommendation of masters. "Being lately at my native place," he wrote, "I was visited by a young lad, son of my fellow-townsman. Do you go to school? I asked him. He told me he went to Milan. And why not here? Because, said his father, we have no teachers." Pliny went on to argue how much better it would be from every point of view that boys should be educated at home. The expense of maintaining a school at Como would not be prohibitive, when account was taken of the cost of travelling and boarding fees at Milan, if parents would club together. Having no children of his own, and regarding the commonwealth as a daughter, he undertook to contribute one-third of any sum which was raised locally to maintain the school. "I would take upon myself," he adds, "the whole expense were I not apprehensive that my benefaction might hereafter be abused and perverted, as I have observed to be the case in several places where the teachers are engaged by the local authorities." Pliny believed in "the rights of the parent" as a means of preventing

abuse. The parents, he says, will be careful to make good appointments if they have to share the expense. "May you be able," he says, in concluding his report, "to procure professors of such distinguished abilities that the neighbouring towns shall be glad to draw their learning from you; and as you now send your children to foreigners for education, may foreigners hereafter flock hither for their instruction!" No record of Pliny's foundation has, so far as I know, been discovered, but it seems unlikely that he would have published the letter unless something had come of his scheme, and it is at any rate a pleasant fancy that Como owed its school of local craftsmen to the most famous of her sons. Such fancies come naturally into mind. Tennyson, when steaming up the lake from Como to Varenna, had in his head "the rich Virgilian rustic measure of Lari Maxume all the way." A traveller who has been reading the letters will have Pliny suggested to him all the day. And when he pauses before the Duomo at Como he will hardly be surprised to find that the central door of this Christian temple should be flanked by figures of the two Plinys. Strange irony of history! One of the most famous of the younger Pliny's writings is the letter to the Emperor Trajan (x. 96), in which from his province of Bithynia he describes the progress of the Christian heresy and asks for instructions as to the treatment of those who

contumaciously persist in it. It is the letter, as also is the Emperor's reply, of a moderate-minded and humane man, but nothing is more remarkable in it than a confident belief that a superstition so harmless, apart from its political implications, must speedily die of inanition if left to itself. The revenge of the conquering faith was to place a figure of the Governor of Bithynia as that of a pagan saint beside the portal of the cathedral in his native town—a revenge truly characteristic, as Mr. Symonds has remarked, of the fifteenth century in Italy.

The kindly tolerance which was characteristic of Pliny appears in a letter to Viconius Romanus (viii. 8) describing the source of the Clitumnus—"one of the most delightful," says an accomplished writer, "of all his epistles, and indeed of all the short letters of which we know." The spot used to be familiar to all English travellers, being on the old post-road from Florence to Rome,[1] and every one knows Byron's description of it in *Childe Harold*. Now that the main railway has taken a different course it is off the beaten track, and Professor Sully's account of a day spent there has almost the air of an adventure.[2] His pleasant chapter shows how much is left of the scene so charmingly described by Pliny, but what immedi-

[1] See *Road-Book from London to Naples*, by W. Brockedon, 1835, p. 129.
[2] *Italian Travel Sketches*, by James Sully, p. 165.

ately concerns us here is Pliny's concluding remark. He has noticed the central temple and several little chapels, and then he goes on thus: "You will also find food for study in the numerous inscriptions, by many hands, all over the pillars and walls, in praise of the spring and its tutelar deity. Many of them you will admire, others you will laugh at; but I must correct myself when I say so; you are too humane, I know, to laugh at any." Pliny was not one of those whose travels are in vain because they take with them a stock of contemptuous prejudices.

Tolerance is, indeed, one of Pliny's favourite virtues. He was so far from those who

> Compound for sins they are inclined to,
> By damning those they have no mind to,

that he would rather have agreed with Blake's

> Mutual forgiveness of each vice,
> Such are the Gates of Paradise.

"Be it our rule," wrote Pliny to Germinius (viii. 22), "at home, abroad, and in every sphere of conduct, to be relentless to ourselves, placable to others, even such as forgive no failings but their own; remembering always what the great and humane Thrasea used often to say, He who hates vice, hates mankind." The moral commonplaces of Pliny often show shrewd observation. Roman proverbs said that the true glory was *laudari a laudato*, and that it was a disgrace *laudari ab*

*illaudatis*; but Pliny knew that mankind as a rule is more easily pleased. "Those who are actuated by the desire of fame and glory are amazingly gratified by approbation and praise, even though it comes from inferiors. . . . I know not how it is, mankind are generally more pleased with an extensive than a great reputation—*magis homines iuvat gloria lata quam magna*" (iv. 12).

There is, by the way, an amusing adaptation of Pliny's saying in one of the essays of whimsical humour which Goldsmith wrote for the short-lived magazine called *The Bee*. "It is impossible," he said, "to repeat all the agreeable delusions in which a disappointed author is apt to find comfort. I conclude that what my reputation wants in extent is made up by its solidity. *Minus iuvat gloria lata quam magna*. I have great satisfaction in considering the delicacy and discernment of those readers I have, and in ascribing my want of popularity to the ignorance or inattention of those I have not."

A friend had lost a dearly loved daughter, and Pliny sent advice about a letter of condolence. "Time," he says, "will render him more open to such consolations; for as a fresh wound shrinks back from the hand of the surgeon, but by degrees submits to the means of cure, so a mind under the first impressions of a misfortune shuns and rejects all consoling reflections, but at length, if applied with tenderness, calmly and willingly

acquiesces in them" (v. 16). Pliny abounds in moral commonplaces of this sort, and his words are often quoted. There is a letter in which he describes his grief at the death of some valued servants (viii. 16). Some people, he says, "describe misfortunes of this kind by no higher term than 'a pecuniary loss,' and fancy that they thereby show themselves men of sense and spirit. They may be wise and magnanimous, but 'men' they are not; *for it is the very essence of human nature to feel the grief which it yet endeavours to resist, and to admit, not to be above, consolation.*" The words which I have italicised were quoted by Shenstone in a letter of much feeling on the death of a dearly-loved brother.[1] "But perhaps," continues Pliny, "I have detained you too long upon this subject—though not so long as I would. For there is a certain luxury in grief"—*dolendi voluptas.* This is Moore's "luxury of woe."

There is nothing very profound in such sayings; but they interest us when we come across them in ancient writers, partly because they are the original source of familiar thoughts or sayings, and partly because they are put with all the characteristic Latin brevity. Pliny perhaps aimed consciously sometimes at such compression as in this sentence: "I may therefore briefly lay down to you and myself a maxim which philosophers endeavour to

[1] It may be read in the admirable collection of Mr. Baptiste Scoones, called *Four Centuries of English Letters.*

inculcate at the expense of many words, and even many volumes; namely, that we should be as virtuous in health as we resolve to be in sickness —*ut tales esse sani perseveremus quales nos futuros profitemur infirmi*" (vii. 26). The converse in the mediaeval Latin is familiar to everybody:

> Aegrotat Daemon; monachus tunc esse volebat.
> Daemon convaluit; Daemon ut ante fuit.

Some of Pliny's sayings in other sorts have pith and point. Ruskin has some pages in analysis of the true nature of wealth and possession, and he asks this question: "In a wreck of a Californian ship, one of the passengers fastened a belt around about him with two hundred pounds of gold in it, with which he was found afterwards at the bottom—now, as he was sinking, had he the gold, or had the gold him?" Pliny had answered the general question in the sense to which Ruskin's parable was intended to lead. "The lust of lucre has so totally seized upon mankind that their wealth seems rather to possess them than they to possess their wealth—*ut possideri magis quam possidere videantur*" (ix. 30).

"I said once, and I think not improperly, of a certain orator of the present age, whose compositions are extremely regular and correct, but by no means sublime and ornamented, His only fault is that he has none." It is not of this present age that these words were written: they are

Pliny's—*Nihil peccat nisi quod nihil peccat* (ix. 26). He thus anticipated Tennyson's "Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null"—a description applicable to some orators and poets in all ages.

One of the most engaging features in Pliny's letters is the sympathy they show with the young. He writes to a friend (viii. 23) about the death of a young man of great promise, who had been accustomed to rely upon his help and counsel. "An uncommon proceeding, this, with the youth of our day; for which of them pays submission as an inferior to age or authority? These young gentlemen begin life as sages, and know everything from the first; there is no one they revere or imitate, as they are their own models." Human nature has not changed, and in all times there are those who need to be reminded that none of us are infallible, not even the youngest. But Pliny had tolerance for the foibles and amusements of young men. In one letter (ix. 12) he recites the advice he had given to a friend who had, as it seemed to Pliny, been too severe with a son for "extravagance in the matter of dogs and horses." "Boys will be boys" was the burden of his advice.

The letter on the death of the excellent young man above mentioned shows much feeling. He had just been elected to first office: "He had an aged parent; a wife who was his bride only a year ago; a daughter, whom he had only lately

given a father's first embrace : so many pleasing hopes, so many tender joys, all reversed and destroyed in one day." There is tender feeling, too, in the account which Pliny gives in another letter (v. 16) of the untimely death of a young girl. "The younger daughter of our friend Fundanus is dead. Never surely was there a more agreeable or amiable young person, or one who better deserved to have enjoyed a long, I had almost said an immortal, life. She was scarce thirteen, and already had all the wisdom and sedateness of a matron, though joined with youthful sweetness and virgin modesty. With what an engaging fondness would she hang upon her father ! How affectionately and respectfully embrace us who were his friends ! How warm her regard for the nurses, attendants, and teachers who in their several offices had the care and education of her ! How studious, how intelligent, at her book, how sparingly and discreetly she indulged in play !" The picture of this excellent young person recalls that drawn by Ascham of Lady Jane Grey. It is well to be reminded that in the days of the Roman Empire there were women precocious in virtue as well as in vice. This daughter of Fundanus had just been betrothed to a most worthy youth. "The wedding day was fixed," says Pliny, "and we were all invited. How sad a change from the highest joy to the deepest sorrow ! How shall I express the wound that pierced my heart

when I heard Fundanus himself (as grief is ever fertile in painful inventions) ordering the money he was to have laid out upon clothes, pearls, and jewels for her marriage to be expended on myrrh and spices for her funeral?" A poet of Greece describes a similar situation, but puts it with more grace, if not with more feeling, than belongs to Pliny's account of the Roman father.[1]

Of Pliny's domestic pictures none is so charming as that of his young wife Calpurnia (iv. 19), whose affection made her get his compositions by heart, who during his recitations sate close at hand, concealed behind a curtain, greedily overhearing his praises, and who, when he was engaged in court, stationed relays of messengers to bring her news of the progress of the case. So dutiful a wife well deserved the pretty notes which he wrote to her during absence. "Were you in sound health, yet I could not feel easy in your absence; but now your sickness conspires with your absence to affright me with a thousand vague disquietudes. Let me conjure you to write to me every day, and even twice a day. I shall be more easy at least while I am reading your letters, and all my fears will return the moment I have perused them." "I read over your letters again and again, and am continually taking them up as if I had just received them" (vi. 4, 7). There is artistic fitness, whether by accident or design, in the fact that the

[1] See the piece on Clearista in the *Greek Anthology*, below, p. 318.

letters of Pliny should end with one in which his Imperial master condones a breach of the strict letter of the law committed by the Governor of Bithynia in solicitude for Calpurnia. Rapid communication between Rome and the provincial governments was maintained by a service of the Imperial Post established by Augustus. At fixed points there were relays of horses, mules, and vehicles; but this service was strictly reserved for the Emperor himself, for imperial officers, or for those who had received a special passport. The passport, called a diploma, was inscribed with the name of the reigning emperor, the name of the person authorised to use the post, and the period for which the permit was available. Now Calpurnia was with her husband in Bithynia when her grandfather died, and she was anxious to pay an immediate visit of condolence to her aunt. Pliny took upon himself to furnish his wife with an imperial diploma, and he wrote an explanation of what he had done to the Emperor. "I have informed you of this," he said, "as I should think myself highly ungrateful were I to dissemble that among other great obligations which I owe to your indulgence I have this in particular, that in confidence of your favour, I have ventured to do without consulting you what would have been too late had I waited for your consent." "You did me justice, my dear Pliny," replied the emperor, "by confiding in my affection towards you.

Without doubt, if you had waited for my consent to forward your wife in her journey by means of the diplomas which I have entrusted to your care, the use of them would not have answered your purpose ; since it was proper this visit to her aunt should have the additional recommendation of being paid with all possible expedition." This is the last we hear of Pliny.

## IV

# THE ART OF EDITING

We live in a much-edited and much-editing age. We are governed, it is said, by the newspapers, and newspapers are sometimes and in some measure governed by their editors. The world's classics are now within reach of new readers, and the range of subjects for literary education has been greatly widened. New opportunities are thus offered to the art of editing. No reprint of a classic in any language is considered complete without notes and an introduction. A selection of English poetry is accompanied in each case by an essay, in which somebody tells us what we are to think of each poet in turn. There is an old University story of one undergraduate seeing another in trouble in the water, and hesitating for a while whether he ought to jump in to the rescue "as they had never been introduced." In these days one almost fears to dip into the Bible without some literary man to introduce it to us. There are even editors of editors. Mr. Palgrave edited with notes and a few essays his famous *Golden Treasury*, and now

there are at least two editions of Palgrave's edition, with notes upon his notes. Are there any rules for editing? What are the necessary qualifications for a good editor? Which are the faults and snares that most beset an editor's path? It may be worth while to consider such questions. At any rate the consideration of them has led me to turn to, and linger over, many a golden page, and the study may perchance interest some other bookmen.

It is of the editing of books, not of newspapers, that I mean to treat in this essay. The conditions of work and the qualifications required in the two cases are very different, but I sometimes think that an editor in each sort might well take a hint or two from the other. The editor of a classic needs, above all things, a gift of patience, whereas the editor of a daily newspaper needs rapidity of judgement; he cannot weigh words with the leisurely deliberation of a scholar who is editing the work of another. Yet a newspaper editor might sometimes do well to be a little less in a hurry where verification is of importance. And some editors have deemed it part of their duty to secure an accurate use of the English language. Mr. Kipling in a chapter on "Regulus," to which further reference will be found elsewhere, has a pointed remark in this connexion. He makes a schoolboy suggest that in a free translation one word used by Horace "might come to about the same thing as another." The school-

master is down upon him at once. "Nothing comes to about the same thing with Horace. As I have said, Horace was not a journalist." The most famous newspaper editor of the Victorian era was a martinet in all that concerned the exact use of words, and nothing was regarded by him as worse than the hasty publication of inaccurate news. On the other hand the editors of classics might advantageously infuse into their work something of the spirit of the newspaper editor. Decision of judgement is often painfully lacking in the former. There is indeed a mean in all things. Rival editors of great authors may easily be too positive and impolite. Carlyle makes Diderot denounce an editor with whom he disagreed as "a Goth, a Hun, a sacrilegious Attila," for whom "the hottest of Dante's Purgatory were too temperate"; and Mr. Swinburne, in expressing his opinion about a certain conjectural emendation, said that "a thousand years of purgatorial fire would be insufficient expiation for the criminal on whose deaf and desperate head must rest the original guilt of defacing the text of Shelley with this most damnable corruption." In such decision as this there is too much of the journalist's bludgeon, but I confess that I like the editor of a classic to have some view or other of his own. But there are editors who seem constitutionally unable to make up their mind, and who if they start a suggestion immediately add that it is not to be

pressed. Such editors, in whom "mistiness" appears as "the mother of wisdom," are the counterpart in the world of scholarship of those "safe men" in the Church who, as Newman describes them, are "not party men, but sensible, temperate, sober, well-judging persons, to guide it through the channel of no-meaning, between the Scylla and Charybdis of Aye and No."

And there is another lesson which many editors of books might well learn from the journalist editors. Almost anything else is forgiven to the editor of a newspaper if he yet makes himself interesting, but a paper if it is dull is damned. Would that it were so with notes to the classics! The President of the Board of Education said the other day[1] with grim humour that a distinction "present to the mind of the absolute was often effaced in the rude world of circumstance"—"the distinction between the schoolroom and the dormitory, between the teacher and the dormouse"; and he went on to point to the editors as the great obstacles to keeping the distinction sharp. The text-books, he said, "contained slabs of information which to any given mind at any given time could not be made significant." He was indulgent and seemed to imply that such offence must needs come, however good the editing might be, and suggested that the only

[1] An address on "The Art of Keeping Alive" given to a Conference of Educational Associations and reported in *The Times* of February 2, 1919.

remedy lay with the teacher, who on occasion should treat the text-books with sovereign disdain. But I think that the editors also might mend matters by making a more determined effort to be interesting.

To be interesting and to be helpful: these are the two essential objects of the good editor, and unless he interests us he will not be able to help us. The pity is that so many editors assume that their readers will be interested in such very dull things.

Of course it is the primary duty of an editor to provide a correct text, and notes on various readings—especially if they be the result of revision by the author himself—may often be interesting. But it is a common habit to dilate upon various readings which are of no interest. On this fault it were unnecessary to dwell at any length, for the last word, though not the most heeded, was said long ago by Addison:

> I have been very often disappointed of late years, when, upon examining the new edition of a classic author, I have found above half the volume taken up with various readings. When I have expected to meet with a learned note upon a doubtful passage in a Latin poet, I have only been informed that such or such ancient manuscripts for an *et write an ac*, or of some other notable discovery of the like importance. Indeed, when a different reading gives us a different sense or a new elegance in an author, the editor does very well in taking notice of it; but when he only

entertains us with the several ways of spelling the same word, and gathers together the various blunders and mistakes of twenty or thirty different transcribers, they only take up the time of learned readers and puzzle the minds of the ignorant. I have often fancied with myself how enraged an old Latin author would be, should he see the several absurdities, in sense and grammar, which are imputed to him by some or other of these various readings. In one he speaks nonsense; in another makes use of a word that was never heard of; and indeed there is scarce a solecism in writing which the best author is not guilty of, if we may be at liberty to read him in the words of some manuscript which the laborious editor has thought fit to examine in the prosecution of his work. (*Spectator*, No. 470.)

The burlesque which Addison goes on to draw of the editing in like fashion of an imaginary English ode will be read with revengeful enjoyment by any one who remembers the persistence with which he was teased by such things in his schooldays.

Sometimes a poet has pointed to the more excellent way. Mrs. Shelley found in one of Shelley's manuscript books a note upon a line in the *Oedipus Rex* (67). It may be amusing, and not I think uninstructive, to give along with it such notes as I find in the best-reputed editions of the play. The speaker is Oedipus, who is besought by his people to find some means of relief from the plague which is devastating the city. He replies that their grief has long been his. "I have wept

many tears and have travelled many paths in the wanderings of thoughts" (*πολλὰς δ' ὁδοὺς ἐλθόντα φροντίδος πλάνοις*). The notes are these :

(*Basil Jones.*)—*φροντίδος*. Depd. on *πλάνοις*. Cf. *Ant.* 225.

(*Lewis Campbell.*)—The gloss of the *Schol.*, *ἀντὶ τοῦ πλάναις θηλυκῶς* confirms the reading *πλάνοις*.

(*Jebb.*)—(67) *πλάνοις* has excellent manuscript authority here; and Sophocles uses *πλάνου* (*O.C.* 1114), *πλάνοις* (*Phil.* 758), but *πλάνη* nowhere. Aeschylus has *πλάνη* only; Euripides *πλάνος* only, unless the fragment of the *Rhadamanthus* be genuine (660, Nauck, v. 8, *οὕτω βίοτος ἀνθρώπων πλάνη*). Aristophanes has *πλάνος* once (*Vesp.* 872), *πλάνη* never. Plato uses both *πλάνη* and *πλάνος*, the former oftenest; Isocrates has *πλάνος*, not *πλάνη*.

(*Shelley.*) — In the Greek Shakespeare, Sophocles, we find the image, *πολλὰς δ' ὁδοὺς ἐλθόντα φροντίδος πλάνοις*—a line of almost unfathomable depth of poetry; yet how simple are the images in which it is arrayed! "Coming to many ways in the wanderings of careful thought." If the words *ὁδοὺς* and *πλάνοις* had not been used, the line might have been explained in a metaphorical instead of an absolute sense, as we say "ways and means" and "wanderings" for error and confusion. But they meant literally paths or roads, such as we tread with our feet; and wanderings such as a man makes when he loses himself in a desert or roams from city to city—as Oedipus, the speaker of this verse, was destined to wander, blind and asking charity. What a picture does this line suggest of the mind as a wilderness of intricate paths, wide as the universe, which is here made its symbol; a world within a world, which he who seeks

some knowledge with respect to what he ought to do searches throughout, as he would search the external universe for some valued thing which was hidden from him upon its surface.

Tennyson had a recollection of the line in section lxx. of *In Memoriam*,

> In shadowy thoroughfares of thought—

but for once he has not adapted very happily, as "thoroughfares" misses the point upon which Shelley dwells. It will have been noticed that the professional editors are much exercised upon the question whether of two words, meaning precisely the same thing and both of them of established usage, Sophocles in this place used the masculine or the feminine form, and I suppose from the unanimity of the scholars in fastening upon the point, that it has some vital significance which escapes me. But as an aid to enjoyment of the Greek poet's language, how infinitely more interesting is the commentary of Shelley! And the contrast between the two kinds of note is the more worthy of consideration because the meticulous attention to such matters as Addison ridiculed has for many years infected, and still in some measure infects, the editing of English books.

For examples of how an English classic ought not to be edited, Professor Churton Collins used to refer to the editions of Shakespeare's plays in

the Clarendon Press series, and in one of his vehement essays he reprinted as a horrible example a page from the notes on *King Lear*. Edmund says :

> Gasted by the noise I made,
> Full suddenly he fled.

Now, that *gasted* means frightened is proper subject for a note, and a certain amount of etymological lore may not unseasonably or unreasonably be added. But Mr. Aldis Wright pursues the word through Trinity College manuscripts and Early English Text Society's publications, discusses words which are like it but not the same, gives various readings in other poems than Shakespeare's, tells us what other writers have wrongly supposed to be its derivation, goes off to French dictionaries, and—but what need to continue? Long before reaching the end of the note all students and most teachers have, I suspect, cried off with "Hold, enough!" What has it all to do with Shakespeare? How does it help us to understand or enjoy him? Heine once remarked, "How fortunate were the Romans that they had not to learn the Latin grammar, for if so they would not have had time to conquer the world." And how fortunate was Shakespeare that he had not to consider the origins and history of his words, for if so he would have had no time to write his plays. Such notes, and they are a staple commodity of the edition in question, are, says Mr. Collins,

"from an educational point of view, all but useless; they are even worse — they render what should be an agreeable study, simply repulsive." I am much of the same mind, but I think that my friend was unduly severe upon the labours of Mr. Aldis Wright and Mr. Clark. They were, as lovers of English literature should gratefully remember, reformers and pioneers. They wanted to introduce English into education, and thought, I suppose, that they would best succeed if they assimilated their notes to the accepted pattern of those on Greek and Latin authors, where the object was not merely to explain the author, but to teach the languages. Also, Shakespeare's language is often obscure to modern readers and does require much elucidation. The pity is that the philological commentary took up so much room as to leave little or none for literature. In the Clarendon Press edition of *Hamlet*, for instance, there is but one brief note on the characters. It is a case of *Hamlet* without the Prince. In the edition of *The Tempest* there is no clue to the allegorical intent of any of the characters. If I were a teacher I would exchange pages of linguistic derivations for a note or two such as Ruskin—less fanciful than usual in dealing with *The Tempest*—has given upon the play. But matters have been greatly amended of late, and as I have put in a plea for the Clarendon Press editors against Mr. Collins, let me here pay a tribute to him and say how much

the humane studies owe to his persistent advocacy, both by precept and in practice, of the claims of literature as against philology. In these days, with Sir Walter Raleigh professing English literature at Oxford and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch at Cambridge, there should be little likelihood of Shakespeare being wrongly edited. Has anything been better said about Shakespeare than by Professor Raleigh in the English Men of Letters series or by Professor Quiller-Couch in his recent volume of lectures? Let an editor of Shakespeare take those books well to heart and he may be sure of escaping the condemnation which Pope pronounced on Kuster and Burman, that

> The critic eye, that microscope of wit,
> Sees hairs and pores, examines bit by bit;

but misses

> How parts relate to parts, or they to whole,
> The body's harmony, the beaming soul.

One essential, then, in the art of editing is that what the editor contributes should be interesting, but the interest must be relevant to the subject. All editorial matter superimposed upon another man's work is an impertinence unless it is a real help to the better understanding of that work. Editing is badly done alike if it invents difficulties where there are none, and if it ignores difficulties where they exist. Of the want of editorial perspicacity, which finds difficulties where there are

none and then resolves them wrongly, Macaulay has given some amusing instances in his essay on Croker's edition of Boswell. I will recall one of them, because it involves some further points of incidental interest. There is an epigram in the Greek Anthology which, playing upon the letters of the Greek word for "live," makes this ordering of the day :[1]

> Six hours suffice for work ; when these we give,
> The next four letters order us to live.

The epigram will perhaps be taken as a motto for the labour movement. Meanwhile it has for some centuries been a common amusement of hard-working students to expand the epigram by a more minute subdivision of the day. Croker, fastening upon a very slight peg in his text, quotes a Latin triplet on the subject which he found in Coke's *Institutes*, and continues thus :

> Of these (lines) Sir William Jones made two versions :
>
> > Six hours to sleep, to law's grave study six ;
> > Four spend in prayer—the rest on nature fix :
>
> rather (he adds),
>
> > Six hours to law, to soothing slumber seven ;
> > Ten to the world allot, and all to Heaven.

Now, if Sir William so wrote, his point is, as Macaulay said, perfectly clear. "Sir William distributes 23 hours among various employments.

[1] *Anth. Pal.* x. 43 ; in Mackail's rearrangement, x. 11.

One hour is thus left for devotion. The reader expects that the verse will end with 'and one to heaven.' The whole point consists in the unexpected substitution of *all* for *one*, and the lines never perplexed man, woman, or child." But Croker's remark is this: "In the second version Sir William has shortened his day to 23 hours, and the general advice, 'of all to heaven,' destroys the peculiar appropriation of a certain period to religious exercises." It remains to add to this comedy of errors that the couplet of Sir William Jones had been misquoted,[1] and really ran

> Seven hours to law; to soothing slumber seven;
> Ten to the world allow, and all to Heaven.

So that as between Croker and Sir William the dispute is futile; but as between Macaulay and Croker the passage may still stand as an exquisite example in one sort of how not to edit, even as Pope had written:

> Let standard authors thus, like trophies borne,
> Appear more glorious as more hack'd and torn.
> And you, my critics! in the chequer'd shade,
> Admire new light through holes yourselves have made.

Who is to decide whether a word or a passage is difficult or not? Many editors seem to rate the average intelligence too low. For instance, in the description of Athens in *Paradise Regained* there is this passage:

[1] See *Gems of Latin Poetry*, by Andrew Amos, p. 120.

> There, flowery hill, Hymettus, with the sound
> Of bees' industrious murmur, oft invites
> To studious musing.

The note in Masson's great edition is this :

> 247–249. *Hymettus, etc.* A mountain near Athens, famous for honey.

Now Sydney Smith advised the ministers of his day not to neglect "the common precaution of a foolometer. I mean the acquaintance and society of three or four regular British fools as a test of public opinion." And in like manner I suppose that professors and schoolmasters use the dunces in their classes as a test of what requires a note of explanation. But the learned and elaborate work of Professor Masson was clearly intended for advanced students ; and as Milton had himself informed us that Hymettus was a mountain near Athens, the repetition of the fact in a note was surely superfluous, and would not even the worst dunce be able to infer honey from the industry of bees?

On the other hand there are superior persons who affect to regard all notes as a superfluity ; but books are edited not for the already omniscient, but for the general reader, and many authors, especially poets, are much more difficult than a careless reader supposes, or a too superior editor chooses to assume. Browning is the most difficult of British poets ; and though he protested against

the suspicion that he was ever wilfully obscure, there have been critics whose remarks upon him recall an anecdote which Quintilian cited from Livy. There was a certain preceptor who used to tell his pupils to darken what they said, and whose highest form of praise was, "Splendid. That passes even my comprehension." Certainly Browning has enjoyed some ill-considered vogue in certain circles from his obscurity. This was not all his fault. He went his own way, writing as was natural to him, but his way took him into many by-paths of learning and many convolutions of thought. Mr. Birrell, whose edition of the poet is remarkable for the exiguity of the notes, assumes too much learning in his readers. "The reader will often be surprised," he says, "how frequently obscurity and difficulty will be dissipated and removed by a careful study of the context." Any reader who applies this flattering unction to a study of *Aristophanes' Apology* or of *Sordello* or of some parts of *The Ring and the Book* will be sadly disappointed. Mr. Birrell's specific is too much like that of the faith-healers. Difficulties in an obscure and allusive poet do not vanish by pretending that they are not there.

Of insufficiently edited books in another sort Carlyle has given an amusing description. "Brière," he says, "seems to have hired some person, or thing, to play the part of Editor; or rather more things than one, for they sign themselves Editors in the plural number; and from

time to time, throughout the work, some asterisk attracts us to the bottom of the leaf, and to some printed matter subscribed EDITS., but unhappily the journey is for the most part in vain; in the course of a volume or two, we learn too well that nothing is to be gained there; that the Note, whatever it professedly treat of, will, in strict logical speech, mean only as much as to say: 'Reader, thou perceivest that we Editors, to the number of at least two, are alive, and if we had any information would impart it to thee.—EDITS.' For the rest, these EDITS. are polite people; and with this uncertainty (as to their being persons or things) clearly before them, continue, to all appearance, in moderately good spirits." Carlyle was speaking of Brière's edition of *The Works of Diderot*; but who does not know the type—the rambling, inconsequential Note leading nowhither, stating the difficulty in other terms, or telling us that something or other, if only it were known, would solve the problem, and withal the cheery unconsciousness that the editor is a completely blind guide? But which kind of editor is the worse—he who writes round a difficulty in the way described by Carlyle, or he who passes it by altogether? I think that editors should confess when they cannot explain a difficulty.

It would commonly be said, I suppose, that while Browning is difficult, Tennyson is easy. That Browning needs helpful editing is certain;

but if any one thinks that Tennyson does not, let him look at Mr. Andrew Bradley's *Commentary on "In Memoriam,"* and therein especially to the long discussions of the meaning of cantos 44, 81, and 122. Canto 44 begins thus :

> How fares it with the happy dead ?
> For here the man is more and more ;
> But he forgets the days before
> God shut the doorways of his head.

Who is the *he* of the third line, "the happy dead," or a man on earth ? Perhaps a reader at first sight will make a prompt choice ; but if he looks through the ten or twelve pages of the editor's acute analysis, he will perceive that there are difficulties in either interpretation, and that the understanding of the canto calls for vigilant study. It is one of the duties of a good editor to keep the reader at attention. I will take an instance from a very well-known piece in which certain lines have been the subject of a lively passage of arms between two eminent critics. In *L'Allegro* Milton invokes the spirit of Mirth,

> And in thy right hand lead with thee
> The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty ;
> And, if I give thee honour due,
> Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
> To live with her, and live with thee,
> In unreproved pleasures free ;
> To hear the lark begin his flight,
> And, singing, startle the dull night,
> From his watch-tower in the skies,

> Till the dappled dawn doth rise ;
> Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
> And at my window bid good-morrow,
> Through the sweet-briar or the vine,
> Or the twisted eglantine.

A reader who trips it as he goes may not detect any difficulty in this passage ; but, in the fourth line from the end, who is "to come" to say good-morning "at my window"—the lark, or somebody else? Professor Masson is very severe with those who take it to be the lark :

> This passage has been strangely misconstrued by some commentators. The skylark, they have told us, never comes to people's windows to bid them good-morrow through the sweet-briar, the vine, the eglantine, or anything else ; and in making it do so, Milton showed that he did not so much observe nature at first hand as fancy her through books ! If the commentators had hesitated a little, they would have avoided this nonsense. It is not the lark at all that Milton makes come to the window and bid good-morrow, and by no possibility could that absurdity fit with the syntax of the passage. By the syntax, as well as by the sense, it is L'Allegro, the cheerful youth (Milton himself, we may suppose), that comes to the window and salutes people. The words, *Then to come*, in line 45, refer back to, and depend upon, the previous words, *Mirth, admit me*, of line 38. Milton, or whoever the imaginary speaker is, asks Mirth to admit him to her company and that of the nymph Liberty, and to let him enjoy the pleasures natural to such companionship. He then goes on to specify such pleasures, or give examples of them. The first is that of the sensations of early morning, when, walking round a country cottage,

one hears the song of the mounting skylark, welcoming the signs of sunrise. The second is that of coming to the cottage window, looking in, and bidding a cheerful good-morrow through the sweet-briar, vine, or eglantine, to those of the family who are also early astir.

The Professor does not explain how Milton, already out, is to come "to my window," but this is by the way. The main point is that Masson will not let it be the lark that is to come. But among the commentators who have adopted that "absurdity," that "nonsense," is Mark Pattison. The famous Rector is more polite than the Professor, and uses the rapier in place of the club, but is equally positive. "The skylark," he says, "never approaches human habitations in this way as the redbreast does. Mr. Masson replies that the subject of the verb *to come* is, not the skylark, but L'Allegro, the joyous student. I cannot construe the lines as Mr. Masson does, even though the consequence were to convict Milton, a city-bred youth, of not knowing a skylark from a sparrow when he saw it." And the Rector goes on to adduce other expressions in Milton, from which it may be inferred (in some cases very disputably, it seems to me) that the poet was not "a close observer of things around us." Enough has been said to show how difficult the passage in *L'Allegro* is; but as I have suggested that editors ought to show their own mind, I must, at the risk

of seeming presumptuous, give my opinion on the rival explanations. I think, then, that Masson is right in his main contention. I read the lines as meaning that L'Allegro is wakened by the lark; that the song and the sunrise make him throw off melancholy (as the Psalmist has it, "heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning"); and that he comes to the window to bid good-morrow cheerfully to the world (as another poet says, "The windows of my soul I throw wide open to the sun"). There is a pretty recollection of Milton's words in one of Ruskin's letters. His friend, Dr. John Brown, had recovered, like himself, from illness, and had been able to resume correspondence. "You will not at all believe the joy it is to me," wrote Ruskin, "to have a letter from you, and to see that you also are as you used to be—my own sweet doctor that had perpetual sympathy with all good effort, and all kindly animated creatures. And I trust we shall both go on yet, in spite of sorrow, speaking to each other through the sweet-briar and the vine, for many an hour of twilight as well as morning." Masson's note on the sense of the passage is much to the purpose, but he does not call attention to Milton's curious confusion in naming the cottage creepers. The sweet-briar is the eglantine; Milton, as Warton pointed out, must have applied the latter term to honeysuckle; but as eglantine should from its derivation mean something that is prickly,

the confusion is curious in so exact a scholar. The exigencies of rhyme may perhaps account for it.

This instance shows that an editor who is bent on keeping the reader at attention may have to resort to paraphrasing his poet. Paraphrase is indeed sometimes essential—at any rate in the case of poetry which is written by thinkers, as occasionally (so Sir William Watson assures us [1]) even in these days it is. Yet paraphrase is an instrument which requires careful handling by teacher or note-writer, lest in interpreting the letter it kill the spirit. Matthew Arnold, in his admirable collection of Reports made by him as an Inspector of Schools, laid great stress upon the value of paraphrase. It is, he said, an excellent way of securing that the pupil shall understand something at least of what he reads, and in examination it is an excellent test of general intelligence; but at the same time he pointed out how such exercise may fail. On one occasion he set these lines from Campbell's *Gertrude of Wyoming*:

> Far differently the mute Oneyda took
> His calumet of peace and cup of joy;
> As monumental bronze unchanged his look.

The pupils appear to have mastered *calumet* rightly, but among the paraphrases of the third line were these:

[1] See a letter from him in *The Times*, Feb. 11, 1919.

His demeanour was as unchangeable as ornamental iron work.

His countenance was fixed as though it had been a memorial of copper and zinc.

The scientific spirit of the age, it will be seen, intruding itself into an alien sphere; though, by the way, the display of science, as the Inspector duly pointed out, was not quite correct. But the point is that however correctly the line was paraphrased, the real meaning of the passage—that is, its import as an appeal to the imagination—would be gone. In poetry of a higher order this truth is yet more apparent. "What is now occupying my attention is the comparative disadvantage of continuing to live and committing suicide." That, I suppose, is logically correct as a paraphrase, but it does not in any true sense give the meaning of the soliloquy in *Hamlet*. "Hamlet," says Mr. Bradley, "was well able to unpack his heart with words, but he will not unpack it with our paraphrases." I must not digress, however, into the well-trodden ground whereon the question of form and substance in poetry has been debated. The truth, I think, may be put in a pair of contrasted and complementary statements. Nothing is really fine poetry unless it will make sense when translated into prose. Nothing is really fine prose poetry unless the value of it disappears when translated into prose. It is not poetry if it is full of sound signifying nothing.

It is not poetry if its full significance is separable from the very words. Editors should be careful in their notes to remember each side of the truth.

Next in importance to giving help towards the general understanding of a passage in the poets are the notes which call attention to the beauty or significance of particular words, for with the lords of language all the charm of all the Muses often flowers, as with Virgil, in a lonely word. Ruskin, who was himself master of a vast vocabulary and a scrupulous artist in the exact use of words, has many a note in this sort. All readers of him are familiar with his analysis in *Sesame and Lilies* of a passage in *Lycidas*, but here from an unfamiliar piece is a suggestive note on two lines of Byron :

> 'Tis midnight ; on the mountains brown
> The cold, round moon shines deeply down.

"Now," says Ruskin, "the first eleven words are not poetry, except by their measure and preparation for rhyme ; they are simple information, which might just as well have been given in prose —it *is* prose, in fact : It is twelve o'clock—the moon is pale—it is round—it is shining on brown mountains. Any fool, who had seen it, could tell us that. At last comes the poetry, in the single epithet, *deeply*. Had he said *softly* or *brightly* it would still have been simple information. But of all the readers of that couplet, probably not two received exactly the same impression from the

*deeply*, and yet received more from that than from all the rest together. Some will refer the expression to the fall of the steep beams, and plunge down with them from rock to rock into the woody darkness of the cloven ravines, down to the uttermost pool of eddying black water, whose echo is lost among their leafage ; others will think of the deep heaven, the silent sea, that is drinking the light into its infinity ; others of the deep *feeling* of the pure light, of the thousand memories and emotions that rise out of their rest, and are seen white and cold in its rays. This is the reason of the power of the single epithet, and this is its *mystery*." The note is perhaps a little too florid —it was written by Ruskin in youth, but it is the kind of note that would help a young student to appreciate the power of poetry :

> Like memory of music fled,
> Like aught that for its grace may be
> Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

Here, again, is an admirably delicate note by another critic upon the line of *Il Penseroso* in which Milton speaks of the "monumental oak"—delicate alike in its sarcasm and in its poetical interpretation :

> The objector, says Mark Pattison, who can discover no reason why the oak should be styled "monumental," meets with his match in the defender who suggests that it may be rightly so called because monuments in churches are made of oak. I should tremble to have to offer an

explanation to critics of Milton so acute as these two. But of less ingenious readers I would ask, if any single word can be found equal to "monumental" in its power of suggesting to the imagination the historic oak of park or chase, up to the knees in fern, which has outlasted ten generations of men; has been the mute witness of the scenes of love, treachery, or violence enacted in the baronial hall which it shadows and protects; and has been so associated with man, that it is now rather a column and memorial obelisk than a tree of the forest.

A bad writer throws in his epithets gratis (unless indeed they be the "standing" or conventional epithets of Homer). A good writer uses them with precise meaning or to appeal to the imagination, and the helpful editor must have a nice understanding for such use. Why does Perdita in *The Winter's Tale* call the violet "dim," and why does Milton call it "glowing"? There was a long discussion on this latter epithet in recent numbers of *The Times Literary Supplement*. I sent an extract from Ruskin's *Proserpina* which seemed to me to settle the question, but I have no doubt that each of the ninety-nine other contributors to the debate was equally well assured that he was right. A future editor will find plenty of alternative interpretations from which to make his choice. He will have discharged his primary duty if he makes his note so interesting as to compel the reader to take the word "glowing" as one which will repay thought.

It is very dangerous for an editor to take an

English classic in hand without an adequate equipment of the ancient classics. An amusing instance has stayed in my memory since I read a certain commentary on Browning many years ago. After the death of Euripides and fall of Athens, Balaustion and Euthukles are sailing to Rhodes, and she proposes to rehearse the tragedy on the voyage :

> What hinders that we treat this tragic theme
> As the Three taught when either woke some woe,
> How Klutaimnestra hated, what the pride
> Of Iokasté, why Medeia clove
> Nature asunder. Small rebuked by large,
> We felt our puny hates refine to air,
> Our prides as poor prevent the humbling hand,
> Our petty passion purify its tide.
> So, Euthukles, permit the tragedy
> To re-enact itself, this voyage through,
> Till sunsets end and sunrise brighten Rhodes !
> Majestic on the stage of memory,
> Peplosed and kothorned, let Athenai fall
> Once more, nay, oft again till life conclude,
> Lent for the lesson : Choros, I and thou !
> What else in life seems piteous any more
> After such pity, or proves terrible
> Beside such terror ?

The passage is of great interest as giving Browning's interpretation of the famous and much-canvassed definition, in Aristotle's *Poetics*, of Tragedy as "purgation." But the note on the passage by one of Browning's editors is this :

"*As the Three taught when either woke some woe*"—*i.e.* the three Furies.

Oh, shades of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides! Some instances, only a little less sad than this, of the pitfalls which beset the path of editors who are insufficiently equipped with knowledge of the ancient classics, were cited a few years ago in a *Saturday* review of a Clarendon Press edition of Shelley's *Adonais*.[1]

*Aristophanes' Apology* is, it must be confessed, as Ruth found a certain book brought home by Tom Pinch, "a teazer to read," and a good edition of it would require the most searching toil. It has not yet been forthcoming in any edition of Browning known to me; and, indeed, I am not sure that what Rossetti wickedly called the earlier study of Euripides—*Exhaustion's Imposture*—might not be applied to Browning's commentators so far as *Aristophanes' Apology* is concerned. Even *Balaustion's Adventure*, though comparatively easy, has fared badly at the hands of some of the editors. Browning, in elaborating Plutarch's story of the Athenian captives at Syracuse who were granted their liberty for reciting verses of Euripides, has these lines:

> Such were in safety: any who could speak
> A chorus to the end, or prologize,
> Roll out a rhesis, wield some golden length
> Stiffened by wisdom out into a line,
> Or thrust and parry in bright monostich,
> Teaching Euripides to Syracuse. . . .

[1] The review in question was reprinted in Mr. Churton Collins's *Ephemera Critica*, 1901.

The editor explains this summary of the ingredients in a play by Euripides—chorus, prologue, speeches, sententious lines, and dialogue in which single line answers to single line—by the information that *rhesis* here means "a proverb," and *monostich* "a single-stanza poem." It is curious that the editors of English poets seem to have little sympathy with Euripides. Every one knows the sonnet of Milton which ends with the lines :

> and the repeated air
> Of sad Electra's poet had the power
> To save the Athenian walls from ruin bare.

The reference is to the passage in Plutarch's *Life of Lysander* :

> A Theban officer gave it as his opinion that the city should be levelled to the ground, and the spot on which it stood turned to pasturage. Afterwards, however, when the general officers met at an entertainment, a musician of Phocis happened to begin a chorus in the *Electra* of Euripides, the first lines of which are these :
>
> Unhappy daughter of the great Atrides,
> Thy straw-crown'd palace I approach.
>
> The whole company were greatly moved at this incident, and could not help reflecting how barbarous a thing it would be to raze that noble city, which had produced so many great and illustrious men.

The story may well have moved Milton, who held Euripides in great honour ; but now hear Palgrave's note on the passage :

Amongst Plutarch's vague stories, he says that when the Spartan confederacy in 404 B.C. took Athens, a proposal to demolish it was rejected through the effect produced on the commanders by hearing part of a chorus from the *Electra* of Euripides sung at a feast. There is, however, no apparent congruity between the lines quoted and the result ascribed to them.

Now, Plutarch's story may or may not be historical, but it is not vague; and the two lines which he gives to identify the chorus are not of the essence of the matter. The point is that the play was still fresh in men's memory, that the poet was lately dead, and that "because Greeks are Greeks, and hearts are hearts, and poetry is power," the hearers were moved to pity. Mr. Palgrave's note means only, I suppose, that he did not share Milton's love of Euripides. Editors should avoid irrelevancies of this kind, which are anything but helps to the right understanding of a passage.

There must be danger if an editor has too little learning, but there may be temptation if he has too much. This is especially the case with editors who collect parallel passages. From the days of Macrobius in the fifth century to the present time this has been a regulation feature in editions alike of ancient and of modern writers. Vast erudition has been expended on tracing the sources of Shakespeare's plays, and the result is worth the labour. What can be more interesting than to note

how sometimes the poet followed his original almost literally—as in some of the finest pieces of eloquence in the Roman plays, which, as Professor Raleigh says, are merely Sir Thomas North's splendid prose strung into blank verse—and how at other times he took a mere hint from some contemporary book and built upon it, as in *The Tempest*, a work of complete originality? And in the study of the great assimilative and literary poets, such as Virgil and Milton and Tennyson, there is nothing more delightful than to trace where the modern poet is thinking of some earlier piece and retouching it in accord with his own genius, or where he uses some word or phrase with a secondary meaning derived from "their passage down the consecrated stream of classical poetry." In the life of Virgil by Donatus a story is told that some one found the poet with Ennius in his hand and asked what he was doing. Virgil is said to have replied that he was collecting gold from the dung of Ennius. We may be sure (especially as the passage is in only one MS.) that Virgil was not so rude to the older poet; but it is true that whenever he borrowed anything from a predecessor he stamped it with some impress of his own genius. And when Milton's widow was asked "if he did not often read Homer and Virgil, she understood it as an imputation upon him for stealing from those authors, and answered with eagerness, that he stole from nobody but the

muse who inspired him." "This is more true than she knew," says Mark Pattison, in whose monograph on Milton some admirable pages will be found upon the charm of "collateral association" in poetic diction. It is the business of an editor to note such things. For instance, in *Lycidas* Milton writes :

> "But not the praise,"
> Phœbus replied, and touch'd my trembling ears.

Masson, who has been followed by other editors, has this note : "A fine poetical appropriation of the popular superstition that the tingling of a person's ears is a sign that people are talking of him. What Milton had been saying about poetic fame might be understood, he saw, as applicable to himself." This may or may not be the meaning of *trembling*, though I think that Milton meant, touched to make them tremble ; but assuredly the collateral association should have been pointed out. Milton had in his mind the words of Virgil, *Cynthius aurem Vellit, et admonuit.* "I am sure," said Tennyson, "that I myself, and many others, find a peculiar charm in those passages of such great masters as Virgil or Milton, where they adopt the creation of a bygone poet, and re-clothe it, more or less, according to their own fancy." This is what Tennyson himself did much more frequently than he liked to think, for he was morbidly sensitive to the least suspicion or suggestion of plagiarism. When *The Princess*

came out, a Canadian writer made a study of it and called attention to these lines :

> A wind arose and rush'd upon the South,
> And shook the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks
> Of the wild woods together ; and a Voice
> Went with it, ' Follow, follow, thou shalt win.'

The lines must have been suggested, it was said, by a passage in Shelley's *Prometheus* :

> A wind arose among the pines and shook
> The clinging music from their boughs, and then
> Low, sweet, faint sounds like the farewell of ghosts
> Were heard, ' O follow, follow, follow me.'

Tennyson, in writing to the author of the Canadian book, said : " I do not object to your finding parallelisms. They must always occur. A man (a Chinese scholar) some time ago wrote to me saying that in an unknown, untranslated Chinese poem there were two whole lines of mine almost word for word. Why not ? Are not human eyes all over the world looking at the same objects, and must there not consequently be coincidences of thought and impressions and expressions ? It is scarcely possible for any one to say or write anything in this late time of the world to which, in the rest of the literature of the world, a parallel could not somewhere be found. But when you say that this passage or that was suggested by Wordsworth or Shelley or another, I demur ; and more, I wholly disagree." The

poet went on to describe the actual way in which many of his passages came into being. Just as Turner took rough sketches of landscape in order to work them eventually into pictures, so Tennyson was in the habit of chronicling, in four or five words or more, whatever struck him as picturesque in Nature. One day when he was walking in the New Forest, he put down the words, "A wild wind shook. Follow, follow, thou shalt win." The wind, he went on to say, "was a west wind, but because I wished the Prince to go south, I turned the wind to the south, and naturally the wind said, 'follow.' I believe the resemblance which you note is just a chance one. Shelley's lines are not familiar to me, tho' of course if they occur in the *Prometheus*, I must have read them." And may they not have stayed unconsciously in Tennyson's mind? Mr. Churton Collins, in his *Illustrations to Tennyson*, brought immense reading and memory to bear upon collecting other such parallels, and in the case of *In Memoriam* Mr. Andrew Bradley has added to the number. The accumulation of parallel passages is a feature which the editors of English books have adopted from editions of the ancient classics. The practice may be seen at its acme in the edition of Virgil by Dr. Kennedy, who divides his commentary under several heads, of which "Parallel Passages" is one. He does not cite the passages or tell us how they are parallel or what light they will be found to

throw on Virgil, but he gives long strings of references. I wonder how many of his readers have ever turned to all those references. Mr. Wheeler, in his excellent edition of "The Golden Treasury," has an entertaining protest against the practice:

> The citation of parallel passages affords a fine field for the display of an editor's reading, or at least testifies to his possession of a good Dictionary of Quotations. . . . The first object of an editor should be to get as far as possible into an author's mind and to put down what he finds there; thus if a poet appears to be consciously drawing on some earlier source, it is an editor's business, as I conceive, to cite the original passage (not merely to give a reference to it); but if there is no such conscious borrowing, the citation of a number of other passages bearing on the same point is to be deprecated as introducing matter, which was not in the poet's mind at the time of writing. And yet it is almost pathetic to see how some reviewers, faithful to the mid-Victorian editions of the Classics on which they were reared, will reproach an editor with not having quoted all the obvious parallels to a passage in the text; this they will doubtless do with the present work, unless by some chance they pause to ask themselves what good end is served by such quotations. They may then realise that a power of abstention is not the least among the requirements of an editor.

All this is forcibly said, and there is another poet besides Tennyson who may be cited in support of it. When it was announced that an edition of Dryden by Sir Walter Scott was in preparation, Wordsworth sent a letter of advice, in which he suggested, among other things, "notes pointing

out authors to whom the poet has been indebted, not in the fiddling way of phrase here and phrase there (which is detestable as a general practice), but where he has had essential obligations either as to matter or manner." I suggest, however, that Mr. Wheeler, in excusable protest against excess in one direction, draws the line with too great restriction in the other direction. Parallel passages may be divided, in accordance with an analysis made by Mr. Bradley, into three classes: (1) Sometimes a poet adopts the phrase of an earlier writer knowingly and with the intention that the reader should recognise it. Milton and Gray often did this. Tennyson does it in reproducing phrases of Theocritus, Catullus, and Virgil. Swinburne does it in phrases from Sappho. (2) At other times a phrase is retained in memory, perhaps for years, and is unconsciously reproduced, with or without significant alteration. (3) A similarity of phrase or thought is mere coincidence. In the first case it is an indispensable piece of the art of editing to be on the watch for such adoptions. A reader who misses the later writer's reference to his predecessors will miss also some of the intent of the passage. In the other cases Mr. Wheeler tells the editor to abstain; but I think that in the second and third cases also it may often be interesting to trace similarity of thought or expression in the works of different minds or ages. The comparison may be a help

towards seizing the essential and distinguishing traits of each writer's genius.

But the search for parallels may easily be carried too far, or be made in a wrong way. It requires nice tact to distinguish between what should be put down to mere coincidence and what must be conscious or unconscious memory. Over-insistence upon real or presumed parallels may obscure the processes of poetic imagination rather than illuminate the processes of poetic craftsmanship. And in pushing such parallels too far, a parade of research or learning may usurp the place of true editing. "There is, I fear," wrote Tennyson, "a prosaic set growing up among us,—editors of booklets, book-worms, index-hunters, or men of great memories and no imagination, who *impute themselves* to the poet, and so believe that *he* too has no imagination, but is for ever poking his nose between the pages of some old volume in order to see what he can appropriate. They will not allow one to say, 'Ring the bell' without finding that we have taken it from Sir P. Sidney, or even to use such a simple expression as the ocean 'roars' without finding out the precise verse in Homer or Horace from which we have plagiarized it." Tennyson averred that this last allegation of plagiarism was "a fact." I have not traced it, but other instances hardly less far-fetched are on record. When Tennyson wrote in *Oenone*,

> The lizard with its shadow on the stone
> Rests like a shadow,

is there really "no doubt that this picture was suggested by a line in Theocritus—

> For now the lizard sleeps upon the wall?"

If that was the source, Tennyson greatly enriched the loan; but as he did not die before seeing a sultry day in the south, surely he may be credited with having seen a sleeping lizard with his own eyes. Does it bring any useful illustration to Tennyson to be old that when he described the moon moving through a fleecy night, Milton had already written of the moon as stooping through a fleecy cloud? I cannot think it necessary to suppose that the figure of Queen Victoria's throne as "Broad-based upon her people's will" was borrowed from Shelley's description of Athens:

> with its crest of columns, on the will
> Of man as on a mount of diamond set.

And still less do the lines,

> For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,
> Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,
> We are each all Dane in our welcome of thee,

recall to me the adulation of Martial in enumerating the various nations which welcome Caesar home:

> Vox diversa sonat populorum, est vox tamen una
> Cum verus patriae diceris esse pater.

In *In Memoriam* (xxxv.) Tennyson wrote :

The moanings of the homeless sea,

and learned editors agreed in saying that this beautiful line was taken partly from Horace ("the shores of the moaning Bosporus")[1] and partly from Shelley's *Alastor* ("The thunder and the hiss of homeless streams"). "Fools!" exclaimed the poet; "as if no one had heard the sea moan except Horace!" But what about the "homeless"?

These are examples of wide reading which has led the editors too far afield. Woe to him, exclaimed Voltaire, who says all he knows on any subject. And Dryden laid down a rule which is as good for editors as for authors: "An author is not to write all he can, but only all he ought." In this matter of parallel passages, and indeed in note-making in general, the ideal editor is, as De Quincey describes, "not one who depends simply on an infinite memory, but also on an infinite and electrical power of combination; bringing together from the four winds, like the Angel of the Resurrection, what else were dust from dead men's bones into the unity of breathing life."

There is one source from which too many parallel passages can hardly be given, and that is from the author himself who is being edited. This is especially true of those who write in a style of

[1] *Odes*, ii. 20: gementis littora Bospori.

esoteric allusiveness. Such was often the style in which Ruskin wrote, and I shudder to think of the pitfalls which must beset, and the wild-goose chases which might tempt, an editor who approached the task in any other spirit than a determination to make Ruskin explain himself. There is a passage in one of the more difficult of his books—*The Cestus of Aglaia*—which well illustrates what I mean. He is speaking of the patience required in the art of engraving:

> There is a time and a way in which all things can be done: none shorter — none smoother. For all noble things, the time is long and the way rude. . . . (Then comes a passage from Spenser's *Faerie Queene* about the two wicked hags, Impotence and Impatience, and he goes on thus:) I cannot get to my work in this paper, somehow; the web of these old enigmas entangles me again and again. That rough syllable which begins the name of Griselda, Gries, the stone; the roar of the long fall of the Toccia seems to mix with the sound of it, bringing thoughts of the great Alpine patience; mute snow wreathed by grey rock, till avalanche time comes—patience of mute tormented races till the time of the Grey league came; at last impatient. Not that hitherto it has hewn its way to much; the Rhine-foam of the Via Mala seeming to have done its work better. But it is a noble colour that Grison Grey;—dawn colour—graceful for a faded silk to ride in, and wonderful in paper for getting a glow upon, if you begin wisely——

with much else, hardly more intelligible, until we return to the main subject. I do not know what

would be made of the passage except by recalling other places in Ruskin's books in which each turn and twist of his wayward thoughts are made clear. I must not encumber the present page by citing all the passages, but a reader who has been teased by the riddling words may be glad of a hint or two. The clue passages are the chapter in *Modern Painters* on "The Mountain Gloom"; a description in the *Notes on his Drawings by Turner* of his coveted piece of the Pass of the Splugen, "which nobody would buy at first,—too grey and colourless to please, I suppose,—being indeed the expression not of Swiss Alps, but of the Grey Kingdom, Grisons, where in 1424 . . ." (follows an account of the formation of the Graubunden); next the various catalogues of Turner's Drawings and Sketches, in which the technique and discipline of the artist's grey paper sketches are dwelt upon; and, lastly, his quotation in another book of lines from Tennyson's *Marriage of Geraint*:

> Earl, entreat her by my love,
> Albeit I give no reason but my wish,
> That she ride with me in her faded silk.

By following up this and other clues I was able to give a note on the passage which, I think, readers have found helpful. It could have been done in no other way, and I submit as a sovereign rule in the art of editing, "Make a difficult author explain himself."

Unfortunately he will not always let you do so, especially if he is a very allusive writer. Here there is nothing for it but an industry which may indeed be relieved by a certain instinct for the scent, but which no difficulty must be allowed to fatigue. Authors who follow current events closely and let their writings be coloured by them make especially heavy calls on editorial patience. I remember a characteristic instance in the author with whom I am, as editor, best acquainted. Ruskin is supposed by some people to have been impracticably wrapt in contemplation of the dear dead past; and Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff tells a story which he imagined to support that view. An acquaintance, meeting Ruskin in the street and seeking to engage him in conversation, remarked upon the sad news from the Soudan. "And who is the Soudan?" said Ruskin. He was only quizzing a bore. He was in reality deeply interested in the fate of Gordon, and at the very time to which Sir Mountstuart's anecdote must refer was writing a letter to my paper on British policy in the Soudan. Any one who reads Ruskin without a knowledge of his topical allusions will certainly miss much of the meaning, and may easily draw very erroneous conclusions. For instance, in various places Ruskin girds at the then Bishop of Manchester, Dr. Fraser—accusing him in one place of "not being able to see much," and, in another, of "lascivious thirst." Putting the two

charges together, a reader might suppose that Ruskin had wildly accused the blameless Bishop of being, to say it plainly, blind drunk. Obviously that was not the case, but what was the meaning of the words? There was nothing to be done except to search the newspapers of the date, and at last I was rewarded by finding in a local print the report of a speech by the Bishop in which, defending the desire of Manchester to drink of the *waters* of the Lake Country, he had added that after all not many people had ever *seen* Thirlmere. It is very simple when explained; but it is not an easy business to hunt down every reference in an allusive writer and "show clear just what it all meant." It is not only the old grammarians and first editors of ancient classics who have had need of almost infinite patience. What a task it must have been to edit well a poem like Pope's *Dunciad*, crowded with contemporary allusions and obscured by the poet's own equivocations and mystifications! Dr. Birkbeck Hill, whose edition of Boswell has been ranked as "a masterpiece of spacious editing," spent nearly twelve years on the task; and James Spedding, whose edition of Bacon was called by Leslie Stephen "an unsurpassable model of thorough and scholarly editing," devoted thirty years to the study of his hero. There was nothing left to be done by any later editor. "Bacon is washed," said Carlyle, "clean down to the natural skin."

I imagine that no editor ever produced from his own unaided memory all the learning which he set out in notes to a classic. He must look for it; and success in the art of editing depends largely on knowing where to look. There are various aids, but nothing will suffice unless a certain *flair* which comes of instinct as well as of practice is present also. Dr. Johnson went one day with Boswell and Sir Joshua to dine with Mr. Cambridge at Twickenham. "No sooner," says Boswell (April 18, 1775), "had we made our bow to Mr. Cambridge in his library, than Johnson ran eagerly to one side of the room, intent on poring over the backs of the books. Sir Joshua observed aside, 'He runs to the books as I do to the pictures, but I have the advantage. I can see much more of the pictures than he can of the books.' Mr. Cambridge, upon this, politely said, 'Dr. Johnson, I am going, with your pardon, to accuse myself, for I have the same custom which I perceive you have. But it seems odd that one should have such a desire to look at the backs of books.' 'Sir, the reason is very plain. Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it. When we inquire into any subject, the first thing we have to do is to know what books have treated of it. This leads us to look at catalogues, and the backs of books.'" "The scholar," said Mark Pattison, "is he who has found the key

to knowledge, and knows his way about in the world of printed books. To find this key, to learn the map of this country, requires a long apprenticeship."

"When found," said Captain Cuttle, "make a note of," but a judicious editor will sometimes abstain. The scale adopted by different editors of similar books differs in a very marked manner. Contrast, for instance, the recently published *Letters of Swinburne* with the edition of *Rossetti's Letters to William Allingham* edited by Dr. Birkbeck Hill. In the case of the former, reviewers complained, not, I think, unreasonably, that Mr. Gosse and Mr. Wise have practised a too severe economy in explanatory comment. The complaint that might be made about the Letters of Rossetti is, on the other hand, that owing to the large print of the notes and their elaborately discursive contents it is sometimes difficult to find the Letters at all. One of the best edited books with which I am acquainted is *The Letters of Byron* by Mr. R. E. Prothero (now Lord Ernle), and here again the only fault that any one could find is some excess of zeal. For instance, Byron, in a letter of 1811, says that he is going to hear one of Coleridge's lectures on poetry, and mentions that in a previous lecture Coleridge had "attacked the Pleasures of Hope, and all other pleasures whatsoever. . . . Campbell will be desperately annoyed." On this passage

the editor gives us not only various notes on the lectures which are relevant and interesting, but also a summary of Campbell's life and work, ending with the information that "his *Theodoric* (1824), *Pilgrim of Glencoe* (1842), and Lives of Mrs. Siddons, Petrarch, and Shakespeare added nothing to his reputation." What have Campbell's works published in 1824 and later to do with Byron's letter of 1811?

This instance (which might be very largely multiplied) suggests a more general question about the art of editing. Should not the power of abstention be used to avoid the inclusion in a commentary of information which is readily available elsewhere? It is true that most editing is the transference of matter from one place to another. "Tout ce qui se peut dire de beau," said Boileau, "est dans les dictionnaires; il n'y a que les paroles qui sont transposées"; and dirt has been defined as only matter in a wrong place. To find relevant matter in an obscure place and to transfer it to another where it may throw light upon a dark corner is good editing, but is it always justifiable to transfer what Mr. Fisher calls "slabs of information" from atlases and dictionaries (of biography or language) to commentaries on the classics? I had this further question in mind when I cited above (p. 155) a certain note by Professor Jebb on a passage in Sophocles. Let us grant that it is of real importance to know which of the Greek

dramatists used the masculine word for "path" and which the feminine; but the information is all to be found in Liddell and Scott, and would it not have sufficed to refer the curious student to that place? This is a very small instance, but it is typical of much editing. If we are destined to live in what some writers have called "the Servile State," a Paper Controller will perhaps issue restrictive regulations in the interests of national economy against the transference of slabs of information from one place to another.

I think, too, that a Minister of the Fine Arts (of which typography is one) might have a word or two to say on the art of editing. I was interested to read the remark in the address by the President of the Board of Education, already mentioned, that "some school libraries contain at least a ton of tedium for every ounce of entertainment, and that if young people are to be attracted to books, books must be made attractive to them." The principle may be applied, I think, beyond the point which Mr. Fisher had immediately in view. All good educators agree with Plato in trusting much to the unconscious influence of a child's surroundings, and one of Mr. Fisher's predecessors gave official countenance to the pleadings of Ruskin and the Art for Schools Association against bare and ugly schoolrooms. But the same principle should not be forgotten by the editors of school books and

commentaries. Every true lover of books has an ideal of what is seemly in a printed page, but some of the greatest editors have been responsible for the worst atrocities in this sort. It were difficult to say whether a page of notes in Munro's *Lucretius* or in Mayor's *Juvenal* presents the more repulsive spectacle. And not only repulsive to the aesthetic sense, but trying to the eyes, and therein distracting from due attention. Bayle quotes some one as saying that "the less the eye is fatigued in reading a book, the more at liberty the mind is to judge of it; that as the beauties and faults of it are more easily perceived when it is printed than in manuscript, so the same beauties and faults are more clearly seen when it is printed in a fair character than when it is printed with a bad letter." Young eyes, however strong, are entitled to some consideration on the part of editors. Ruskin went further, and with reference to the engravings in the Leipsic edition of Heyne's *Virgil* (1800) suggested that "the production of well-illustrated classics would at least leave free of money-scathe, and in great honour, any publisher who undertook it; and although schoolboys in general might not care for any such help, to one, here and there, it would make all the difference between loving his work and hating it. For myself, I am quite certain that a single vignette, like that of the fountain of Arethusa in Heyne, would have set me on an eager quest, which would

have saved me years of sluggish and fruitless labour." I am not sure that Ruskin would have been satisfied with process-blocks in place of line-engravings; but it is a good thing, so far as it goes, that so many classical books should now be illustrated by reproductions of gems, coins, and statues.

It remains to notice certain mechanical aids which every editor owes it to his readers to supply. I have left them to the last, but they are by no means the least of the rules of good editing. Any fool can observe them, but they have been strangely neglected by some very wise men. The object of editing is, as can hardly be said too often, to help a reader, to save his time, and to facilitate his intelligent study. Editors sin against the light by acts both of commission and of omission. Under the former head, I count as the worst offenders those who needlessly multiply subdivisions and introduce new systems of reference. In Kennedy's *Virgil* the notes are subdivided, under five heads, thus: "Outline," "Translation," "Select Vocabulary," "Notes," and lastly (as above said), "Parallel Passages." A reader who looks for help in any particular passage has to turn over page after page and search in five different places. An obvious duty of editors is to make reference easy. Mr. Mackail in his otherwise admirable edition of the Greek Anthology introduces a

numbering of sections, and of the pieces in each section, which is all his own, and which is both confusing and cumbrous. Why should not the pieces have been numbered straight through? He who introduces a new system of reference of his own, wilfully makes reference more difficult. He is almost as great an offender as a director who changes the numbers of the pictures in his gallery.

First among the mechanical aids which too many editors omit to supply—guilty of what I see[1] that Horace Walpole used to call "sins of the tribe of Om"—I place an intelligent use of the page headings. I asked above whether the notes in Mayor's *Juvenal* or Munro's *Lucretius* were the more repulsive in appearance. I think in view of the further point now under consideration that I must decide against Munro, for Mayor stands almost alone among classical editors in using headlines on *recto* and *verso* to tell the reader what the notes are about. I took up just now an edition of Pope, which in some respects is carefully done. But on every left-hand page the heading is "The Poems," and on every right-hand page "Of Pope." Did the editor suppose that I should forget as I turned the leaves what poet it was? I was looking for a particular piece, and of course every page should be headed by the title of the poem which it contains. There are few things more aggravating, but also few more common,

[1] From a review in *The Times Literary Supplement*, Feb. 27, 1919.

than the neglect of this rule of right reason. One thing, however, there is which is worse still, and that is that an editor of a long poem should fail to number the lines. There is a famous poem which another poet called "drowzy and frowzy" and which at any rate is very long. Yet in the best and handiest edition of Wordsworth the lines in the *Excursion* are not numbered. You feel that insult is added to injury when in some note or introduction you are referred by number to a particular line, and then find that no number is supplied. Is the omission of subtle design to lure you on to read through the whole? If so, the snare is vain. It is quicker—*experto crede*—to count than to read. Life is short. Of the making of books there is no end. The curiosity of an intelligent scholar is large. He will bear a grudge against any editor who wastes time by sheer neglect of common-sense rules. But, as an ingenious writer on a different subject has remarked, "it is difficult to exaggerate the power which pure habit has in these matters. To take one simple and commonplace instance, it is but a few years ago since, in registering documents, books, or any other matters requiring continuous record, bound volumes were used which had to be of vast size in order to leave the necessary space for future entries. Some nameless genius in America at length conceived that the same thing could be done in a much smaller space and with infinitely greater

convenience by detached cards in a drawer. As every one knows, the card and loose-leaf system has revolutionised business and administrative methods."[1] I sometimes wonder whether editing would not be better done if every able editor were compelled to consult a commercial man on the application of time-saving expedients to the matter in hand. Let not any editor, however great, wise, and eminent he may be, suppose that by other merits he will wipe out the blame for such neglect as I have mentioned. For all your learning and wit you may or may not be praised. Your notes, however well intended and executed, may or may not be welcome. You never can be sure. You may tell one reader what he knew already, and another reader what he has no wish to know. But to save his time and to facilitate reference is a matter of moment to every reader, and if you neglect to do this for him, you must not hope, by any excellence in other parts of your work, to escape condemnation.

As for the rest, it were not amiss to remember what Rossetti said in describing his suffering at the hand of certain Italian "button-holders" among editors: "The glare of too many tapers is apt to render the altar-picture confused and inharmonious, even when their smoke does not

[1] An article on the League of Nations, pleading for new methods in diplomacy, in *The Round Table*, December 1918.

obscure or deface it." An editor would do well to apply to his notes and introductions what an old writer claimed for his *Essays* and *Discourses*: "I have only this to say, that I design'd in them as much *Brevity* and *Clearness* as are consistent with each other, and to abound in *sense* rather than *words*. I wish all men would observe this in their writings more than they do. I'm sure the *multitude of Books* and *shortness of Life* require it, and sense will lye in a little compass if men would be perswaded to vent no Notions but what they are *Masters* of, and were *Angels* to write, I fancy we should have but few *Folios*." [1]

[1] Introduction to the *Miscellanies* of John Norris (1687). As Norris was a clergyman, let us hope that in the pulpit he was as good as his word.

## V

## POETS AS CRITICS

Artists, whether in literature or in painting, have generally been impatient of critics. "You know who the critics are?" says Mr. Phoebus in *Lothair*: "the men who have failed in literature and art." Tennyson warned the critics off Parnassus, and Whistler poured scorn on those who spend their lives in talking about what they have never done. It is implied in such sayings that the men who create are the only good judges of what is created; that, as the Latin proverb has it, only the man who is skilled in an art is to be trusted when he talks to you about it. A poet, then, should be judged only by his peers. If this view be correct, poets should be the best critics of poetry. Perhaps they are; but at the outset of an inquiry into this matter, let us shelter ourselves, in case a different conclusion should be reached, behind a famous name. The Delphic oracle had been asked if there was any man wiser than Socrates, and the answer was that there was no man wiser. What, said Socrates to himself,

could be the meaning of this—that he who knew nothing, and knew that he knew nothing, should be declared by the Oracle to be the wisest of men? He resolved to refute the Oracle by finding and producing a wiser; and first on his voyage of discovery he went to the politicians, but he found that these great and eminent men, although thought wise by many, and wiser still by themselves, were not really wise at all. And then he went to the poets, and questioned them upon their art. He tried them all—tragic, dithyrambic, and all sorts. "But will you believe me, I am almost ashamed to speak of this, but still I must say that there is hardly a person present who would not have talked better about their poetry than they did themselves?" And Plato, who makes Socrates say this, was himself a poet; though, to be sure, some aver that only when he had failed in poetry did he take to philosophy, and critical persiflage in prose. But, again, let us recall, also at the outset, a fact which may suggest the other conclusion. I suppose that every one would agree in naming among the best critics of English poetry, Dryden, Coleridge, and Matthew Arnold, and all three were themselves poets. Mr. George Wyndham has named two other pieces as in a class by themselves—Myers' essay on Virgil, and Francis Thompson's on Shelley—again, each the work of a poet. In some of the instances named, it may be questioned

whether the excellence of the criticism was caused by the attainment of the poet, but of Francis Thompson's piece it must be said that it is itself almost a poem. And now, with minds ready for either conclusion, we may start, if the reader will, upon a ramble among the poets to gather such instances as come of what the poets have said about themselves and their fellows.

It is a vast field, and the ramble will be desultory. The hates and loves of the poets as critics fill a large space in their works and records. Mark Pattison said that as civil history is largely a history of wars between states, so "literary history is the record of quarrels in print between jealous authors. Poets and artists, more susceptible than practical men, seem to live a life of perpetual wrangle. . . . These quarrels of authors only show them to be, what we knew, as vain, irritable, and opinionative as other men." In which respect the literary world closely resembles, if the evidence of Pattison's *Memoirs* may be trusted, the academical world. But this is only part of the truth. As large a space in the works and sayings of the poets is given to their praises of each other as to their recriminations. In another chapter the charm of the Greek Anthology is discussed, but I have not there noted what is one of its most pleasing features—namely, the epigrams devoted to the praise of the poets. Meleager in

the proem to his "Garland" names many of those whose works he collected, and each mention is made in the form of some appropriate criticism—as in the well-known phrase, "and of Sappho little but all roses." "The whole is done," says Mr. Mackail, "with the light and sure touch of a critic who is himself a poet." The epigrams on many of the poets have a like felicity. Mr. Symonds finds in them "the very quintessence of criticism," and Mr. Mackail, "a real touch of imaginative criticism." The "little but all roses" of Sappho has given birth to a volume of poetry exceeding in quantity all that remains of the poetess. Mr. Swinburne, both in verse and in prose, has laid abounding tribute at her feet. "Judging," he says, "even from the mutilated fragments fallen within our reach from the broken altar of her sacrifice of song, I for one have always agreed with all Grecian tradition in thinking Sappho to be beyond all question and comparison the very greatest poet that ever lived. Aeschylus is the greatest poet who ever was also a prophet; Shakespeare is the greatest dramatist who ever was also a poet; but Sappho is simply nothing less—as she is certainly nothing more—than the greatest poet who ever was at all." [1] Mr. Wharton, in his charming edition, noted with pleasure that Tennyson "recurred in his latest volume

[1] From a posthumous essay printed in the *Saturday Review*, February 21, 1914.

of poems (1887) to a phrase from Sappho which he had used nearly sixty years ago," [1] and that he "called her *the poet*, implying her supremacy by the absence of any added epithet." It was, perhaps, as a protest, or a relief from the literary wrangles of Addison's day that he took occasion in *The Spectator* to call attention to the epigrams in the Greek Anthology upon Euripides, and other of the poets.[2] These epigrams show, he said, that "they who deserve praise have it returned them from different ages: let those which have been laid down show men that envy will not always prevail. And to the end that writers may more successfully enlighten the endeavours of one another, let them consider, in some such manner as I have attempted, what may be the justest spirit and art of praise. It is, indeed, very hard to come up to it. Our praise is trifling when it depends upon fable; it is false when it depends upon wrong qualifications; it means nothing when it is general; it is extremely difficult to hit when we propose to raise characters high, while we keep to them justly." A poet of our own day has said that he has been chided

[1] In *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*: "Hesper, whom the poet call'd the Bringer home of all good things." The earlier reference to the same fragment of Sappho (No. 95 in Wharton) was in the piece among the *Juvenalia* called "Leonine Elegiacs":

> The ancient poetess singeth, that Hesperus all things bringeth,
> Smoothing the wearied mind.

[2] See below, p. 360.

because I have full oft
In singers' selves found me a theme of song,
Holding these also to be very part
Of Nature's greatness, and accounting not
Their descants least heroical of deeds.

In this as in other respects he has trodden in the footsteps of his predecessors. English poetry is full of the art of praise. It is for the very verses which he here excuses that Sir William Watson is likely to be best remembered. His *Wordsworth's Grave* contains some of his happiest phrases—such as, "Shelley's flush of rose on peaks divine," and "the wizard twilight Coleridge knew"; and both in that piece and in those on "Shelley's Centenary" and "To Edward Dowden" there is excellent criticism on the several characteristics of Keats, Shelley, and Wordsworth.

Which poet of the many who have written verses on the prince of poets has done it best? He was too near for his contemporaries to see him aright, and Ben Jonson's lines in the first folio do not satisfy later critics. Milton's words in *L'Allegro*—

sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild—

have been generally thought under the mark, and indeed to be applicable only to a small part of the poet's work. "Fortunately," says Professor Masson, "we can go back to Milton's lines 'On Shakespeare' in 1630, and be fully satisfied."

But can we? There are fine things in the lines, but do they sufficiently avoid what Addison calls "the general"? In describing particular qualifications, Milton notes with admiration a gift which he himself did not share—

> to the shame of slow-endeavouring art
> Thy easy numbers flow.

But is this one of the things for which Shakespeare is most justly to be praised? I cannot resist the pleasure of transcribing (though every one knows it) a passage in Ben Jonson's *Discoveries*:

> I remember, the players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare, that in his writing, whatsoever he penned, he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, would he had blotted a thousand. Which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this, but for their ignorance, who chose that circumstance to commend their friend by, wherein he most faulted. And to justify mine own candour (for I loved the man and do honour to his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any). He was indeed honest, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent Phantasy; brave notions, and gentle expressions; wherein he flowed with that facility, that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped: *Sufflaminandus erat*, as Augustus said of Haterius. His wit was in his own power; would the rule of it had been so too!

Of this famous criticism, it has been remarked that it notes in Shakespeare a deficiency in qualities on which Jonson himself, true to classical

canons, set the highest value. "To judge of poets," says Ben Jonson, "is only the faculty of poets; and not of all poets, but the best." Of the poetical criticisms of Shakespeare in verse, Matthew Arnold's sonnet comes nearest to being adequate; but if so, was its success due to Arnold being a better poet than the others, and not rather to his being more of a critic? The fault of the sonnet, as poetry, is, indeed, that it contains a note of strain as of a critic trying by fine writing to rise to the occasion.

What, then, is the finest poetical tribute ever paid in English verse by one poet to another—taking into account both the beauty of the words and also the success in hitting the mark, as Addison says, "when we propose to raise characters high, while we keep to them justly"? The most moving is the invocation to *The Ring and the Book*:

> O lyric Love, half-angel and half-bird
> And all a wonder and a wild desire . . .

but that was criticism transfused and heightened by personal love. Browning's tribute to Dante is fine in itself, and contains also an excellent piece of criticism in distinguishing between the spontaneous and the brooding order of poets:

> "Touch him ne'er so lightly, into song he broke:
> Soil so quick-receptive,—not one feather-seed,
> Not one flower-dust fell but straight its fall awoke
> Vitalizing virtue; song would song succeed
> Sudden as spontaneous—prove a poet-soul."

Indeed?
Rock's the song-soil rather, surface hard and bare:
Sun and dew their mildness, storm and frost their rage
Vainly both expend,—few flowers awaken there:
Quiet in its cleft broods—what the after age
Knows and names a pine, a nation's heritage.[1]

Thus I wrote in London, musing on my betters,
Poets dead and gone: and lo, the critics cried
"Out on such a boast!" as if I dreamed that fetters
Binding Dante bind up—me! as if true pride
Were not also humble!
So I smiled and sighed
As I oped your book in Venice this bright morning
Sweet new friend of mine, etc.

Have the range of Browning's own genius and his method of treatment ever been summed up so well as by Swinburne in the fifth Sonnet of the Sequence which he wrote upon the poet's death?

Among the wondrous ways of men and time
He went as one that ever found and sought
And bore in hand the lamplike spirit of thought
To illume with instance of its fire sublime
The dusk of many a cloudlike age and clime.
No spirit in shape of light and darkness wrought,
No faith, no fear, no dream, no rapture, nought
That blooms in wisdom, nought that burns in crime,
No virtue girt and armed and helmed with light,

[1] The lines down to this point were the Epilogue to the Second Series of *Dramatic Idyls*, and it may be worth pointing out that this epilogue echoes the thought which was struck in the Prologue and illustrated by the several Idyls themselves—namely, the infinite diversity in "what's under lock and key," *i.e.* Man's soul. So with poetry, as explained in the epilogue. The additional lines were printed "from a young American lady's album" in the *Century Magazine*, November 1882.

No love more lovely than the snows are white,
No serpent sleeping in some dead soul's tomb,
No song-bird singing from some live soul's height,
But he might hear, interpret, or illume
With sense invasive as the dawn of doom.

This is much better than Landor's sonnet on the same theme. It opens finely :

There is delight in singing, tho' none hear
Beside the singer : and there is delight
In praising, tho' the praiser sit alone
And see the praised far off him, far above.

But when Landor comes to particulars, the sonnet descends to the obvious and the verse to the pedestrian. An irreverent critic thus dismisses it : " ' Browning was a keen observer of character; a master of many styles : preferred Italian subjects.' How very interesting ! " Mrs. Browning in " A Vision of Poets " and " Wine of Cyprus " has some good criticisms in vignette. The best known is that which, in spite of its terribly unhappy second line, Browning prefixed as a motto to his *Balaustion's Adventure* :

Our Euripides, the human,
With his droppings of warm tears,
And his touches of things common
Till they rose to touch the spheres.

The lines on Lucretius are better :

Who dropped his plummet down the broad
Deep universe and said, " No God—"
Finding no bottom : he denied
Divinely the divine, and died
Chief poet on the Tiber-side.

And this, from "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," written before she had met the poet, is good—

> Or from Browning some "Pomegranate," which, if cut deep down the middle,
> Shows a heart within blood-tinctured, of a veined humanity.

But for adequacy of criticism wedded to beautiful verse, I think the prize must be divided between Tennyson and Wordsworth. The piece "To Virgil" is the very quintessence of true Virgilian criticism expressed with Virgil's own felicity of phrase. Wordsworth's lines on Milton are less exhaustive of their theme, but have a wonderful concentration of just praise :

> Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart :
> Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea
> Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free.

We must agree, I think, with Jonson that "to judge of poets is only the faculty of poets" so far as to recognise that the poets, when they sing of each other, have attained a felicity and a concentration of point which the professional critics in prose labour after in vain. A poet's judgement, too, of particular phrases and words is more likely to be right and luminous than that of other men. In another chapter a note of Shelley's on a passage in Sophocles is given and compared with those of the scholars. Mr. Traill pointed a somewhat similar comparison in his monograph on Coleridge. "*Primus inter pares* as a critic of any order of

literature, Coleridge," he says, "is in the domain of Shakespearian commentary absolute king. . . . These consummate criticisms are essentially and above all the criticisms of a poet. They are such as could not have been achieved by any man not originally endowed with that divine gift which was fated in this instance to expend itself within so few years. Nothing, indeed, could more strikingly illustrate the commanding advantage possessed by a poet interpreting a poet than is to be found in Coleridge's occasional sarcastic comments on the *banalia* of our national poet's most prosaic commentator, Warburton — the 'thought-swarming, but idealess Warburton,' as he once felicitously styles him. The one man seems to read his author's text under the clear, diffused, unwavering radiance emitted from his own poetic imagination; while the criticism of the other resembles a perpetual scratching of damp matches, which flash a momentary light into one corner of the dark passage, and then go out." Something of the same kind might be said of Mr. Swinburne's "Notes on Shelley" in comparison with certain other commentators.

Then, again, an interesting study in the poets as critics might be made by collecting, not their actual notes, but passages in which by obvious reference to earlier writers the later poets give their view of some disputed point. There is a vexed passage, for instance, near the beginning of

Plato's *Phaedo* in which the ethics of suicide are debated. Why, it is asked, when a man is better dead, should he not be permitted to be his own benefactor instead of waiting for the hand of another? "There is a doctrine," says Socrates, "uttered in secret, that man is a prisoner who has no right to open the door of his prison and run away; this is a great mystery which I do not quite understand." So Jowett translates, following most of the editors. But the Greek words admit of another interpretation: "We men are, as it were, on guard," not in prison. I turn up my school edition with notes by Wagner, who discusses and rejects this alternative, but I see from my old pencilled note that my form-master brushed the German away and told us to translate the words as "on guard" or "at a post." And indeed if "prison" be the right rendering, it is difficult to see what the rest of the sentence means, for (except at the end of a victorious campaign or in time of revolution) prisoners are not able to open the door of their prison and run away, however willing they may be to do so. My good form-master had Tennyson on his side; see *Lucretius*:

> And me, altho' his fire is on my face
> Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can tell
> Whether I mean this day to end myself,
> Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,
> That men like soldiers may not quit the post
> Allotted by the Gods.

So, again, a passage has been cited in the preceding chapter (p. 174), showing Browning's contribution to the voluminous discussion of the meaning of Aristotle's definition of Tragedy. Another instance is suggested by a reference given in an earlier chapter (p. 71) to a piece by Catullus. The poet, on returning from his travels in Asia to his home at Sirmio on the lake of Garda, bids the waters of the lake to rejoice with him. *Gaudete vosque, O Lydiae lacus undae:* "Ye, too, rejoice, O Lydian waves of the lake." Why *Lydian*? The interpretation has been much disputed, and some editors, being dissatisfied with all the suggestions, have proposed to alter *Lydiae* to *limpidae* or *lucidae*. The ordinary explanation is that the phrase was an inversion for "waters of the Lydian lake," and that Catullus called it Lydian because Etruscans, who were supposed to have come from Lydia, in old times lived in those parts. If this be the correct interpretation, the poet is reduced to an antiquarian. Calverley in the version quoted on an earlier page suggests a very different interpretation. He translates, "Ye waters of the golden mere." Catullus, as another editor says in noting this translation, who had "just returned from Asia Minor, with Lydia and Lydia's golden river, Pactolus, in his thoughts, sees in the Lago di Garda, true Lydian or golden waters, not less precious than those of the *Lydius aurifer amnis*." There can be no doubt what Tennyson thought on

the subject. Catullus was a favourite poet with him and was his constant travelling companion. In the poem to Catullus written at Sirmio he must have been thinking of Catullus's own words when he penned the line, "Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the Garda lake below." Tennyson took the poet to refer by the epithet *Lydian* to the laughing golden ripples. I do not know if scholars will agree, for the supposed allusion to a Lydian origin of the Etruscans and their former occupation of Lombardy has been taken as a justification of the epithet often applied to Catullus, *doctus poeta*, Catullus the scholar; but this is the kind of point on which a poet, interpreting a poet, is more likely than another man to be right. That was the claim which Dryden made. "I have even sometimes," he says in the Preface to his Translations, "very boldly made such expositions of my authors, as no Dutch commentator will forgive me. Perhaps, in such particular passages, I have thought that I discovered some beauty yet undiscovered by those pedants, which none but a poet could have found."

Are the poets equally likely to be the best critics and expositors of their own work? Plato's experience, it will be remembered, was not promising, and in reading that passage one recalls what has been related of Coleridge. His *Biographia Literaria* is one of the world's masterpieces of

criticism, and nothing can be more just and luminous than his exposition of Wordsworth. But when he came to deal with his own work, his critical gift seemed to disperse into cloud. "He frequently recited his own poetry," says Dr. Carlyon, "and not unfrequently led us further into the labyrinth of his metaphysical elucidations either of particular passages or of the original conception of any of his productions, than we were able to follow him." The good doctor should have taken the poet's mystifications as Charles Lamb did. He and Leigh Hunt had sat one night in the Highgate drawing-room for long hours listening to the oracle. Hunt, on the way home, groaned over the obscurity of what they had heard. "Why, you see," said Lamb, stammering, "C-c-coleridge has so much f-f-fun in him."

Is a poet always the best judge of what is best in his work? It is very doubtful. I say this, not forgetting Swinburne's warning. "It is only among dunces," he writes, "that it is held improbable or impossible for a great writer to judge aright of his own work at its best, to select and to prefer the finest and the fullest example of his active genius." The case which he cites in support of his remark is the selection of *David Copperfield* by Dickens. This preference has generally been accepted as right, and it would be folly to say that a great writer can never choose

aright among his works or that it is improbable that he should do so. But is it certain? Was Fielding right in preferring *Joseph Andrews* to that other novel which, in Gibbon's stately panegyric, was destined to "outlive the palace of the Escurial and the Imperial Eagle of Austria"? When Byron came back from his first foreign tour, he brought with him the manuscript of *Hints from Horace* and the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*. He was as eager to publish the Horace as he was careless and reluctant about the Childe. He pressed the *Hints from Horace* upon Dallas, and at first kept back the other. Dallas did not think highly of the Horace, and called again. "Have you no other result of your travels?" he asked. *Childe Harold* was then produced from Byron's trunk. "A lot of Spenserian stanzas," said the poet, "not worth much, but you shall have them if you like." Dallas took him at his word and went off to Mr. Murray. Byron woke one morning and found himself famous, and Dallas was richer by £600. With Byron it is always difficult to be sure that he was not acting. There is one piece, however, from which pose is absent and which shows him at his best, and Byron himself seems to have known it. "This morning," wrote Count Gamba on January 22, 1824, "Lord Byron came from his bedroom into the apartment where Colonel Stanhope and some friends were assembled, and said with a smile,

'You were complaining, the other day, that I never write any poetry now: this is my birthday, and I have just finished something, which, I think, is better than what I usually write.' He then produced those noble and affecting verses on his own birthday, which were afterwards found written in his journal with only the following introduction: *January 22: on this day I complete my thirty-sixth year.*

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move;
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf:
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

. . . . . .

If thou regret'st thy youth, *why live?*
The land of honourable death
Is here:—up to the field, and give
Away thy breath!

Seek out—less often sought than found,
A soldier's grave—for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest.

We perceived from these lines," continues Count Gamba, "as well as from his daily conversations, that his ambition and his hope were irrevocably fixed upon the glorious objects of his expedition to Greece, and that he had made up his mind to

'return victorious, or return no more.' Indeed, he often said to me, 'Others may do as they please —they may go—but I stay here, that is certain.'" A few weeks passed, and Greece saw Byron's struggle cease. "His true love," says Ruskin, "*was* at last known 'from another one' at Missolonghi."

Byron, in choosing this piece as "better than what I usually write," was certainly a good judge. About some other preferences of the poets we must feel a doubt. Dryden considered that his "masterpiece in English" was his translation in Pindaric verse of the 29th Ode of the third book of Horace (*Tyrrhena regum progenies*). Few will agree with him, but this was said in 1685, some years before he had written his own *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*.

Heine, whose plays are forgotten and who lives as one of the world's greatest song-writers, said that his tragedies were very good—"better than my collection of poems which are not worth a shot."

Coleridge regarded *Christabel* as his masterpiece and as containing "a more effective realisation of the natural-supernatural idea than *The Ancient Mariner*." Most readers will admit the claim of *Christabel* to rank very high, but few have been found to agree in this comparison.

William Morris considered his epic of *Sigurd the Volsung* as his highest achievement in literature

and as standing apart and above his other poetry. Will posterity confirm the poet's choice?

Shelley was not so confident as Mr. Swinburne, that a poet's own judgement of his work is sound. "The poet and the man," he said, "are two different natures; though they exist together they may be unconscious of each other, and incapable of deciding on each other's powers and efforts by any reflex act." But "no criticisms upon Shelley's poems are half so good," it has been said,[1] "as his own," and certainly the opinion of posterity has confirmed the very high place among his works, and the place in poetry at large, which he claimed for *Adonais*. "The *Adonais*," he said, "in spite of its mysticism is the least imperfect of my compositions." And again, "It is a highly wrought piece of art, and perhaps better in point of composition than anything I have written." "It is absurd in any review to criticise *Adonais*, and still more to pretend that the verses are bad." "I know what to think of *Adonais*, but what to think of those who confound it with the many bad poems of the day, I know not." And, finally, "I confess I should be surprised if that poem were born to an immortality of oblivion." It was born to an immortality of remembrance among some of the greater pieces in English poetry.

And here I am tempted to digress for a short space into a further "Study in Superlatives."

[1] See J. A. Symonds's *Shelley* in the "English Men of Letters" series.

Which is the greatest elegiac poem in the English language? Mr. Swinburne named three as "so great that they eclipse and efface[1] all the elegiac poetry we know; all of Italian, all of Greek." To *Lycidas* he gives the first place; its five opening lines are to him "the most musical in all known realms of verse." (As a curiosity of criticism, contrast this judgement with Dr. Johnson's: "One of the poems on which much praise has been bestowed is *Lycidas*, of which the diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers unpleasing. . . . Surely no man could have fancied that he read *Lycidas* with pleasure, had he not known its author.") Between *Adonais* and *Thyrsis* Mr. Swinburne does not pronounce decisively, but it is not clear that he did not rank Arnold's elegy above Shelley's. "The least pathetic of the three," he says, "is *Adonais*, which, indeed, is hardly pathetic at all; it is passionate, subtle, splendid; but *Thyrsis*, like *Lycidas*, has a quiet and tender undertone which gives it something of sacred. Shelley brings fire from heaven, but these bring also 'the meed of some melodious tear.'" I think, however, that the general opinion would be that *Thyrsis*, beautiful though it is, must be placed

[1] They may equal or surpass the "Lament of Moschus for Bion," but why efface? But poets when they praise are apt thus to force the note. Raleigh in the sonnet prefixed to *The Faerie Queene*—which has been called "the finest compliment ever paid by poet to poet"—makes oblivion overtake Petrarch's Laura, and Homer's spirit curse the celestial thief at the advent of Spenser.

after *Lycidas* and *Adonais*. But is the primacy of *Lycidas* certain? As against Mr. Swinburne's opinion may be set that of Mr. Francis Thompson, who, in his beautiful Essay on Shelley, has this passage: "Were we asked to name the most perfect among his longer efforts, we should name the poem in which he lamented Keats; under the shed petals of his lovely fancy giving the slain bird a silken burial. Seldom is the death of a poet mourned in true poetry. Not often is the singer coffined in laurel-wood. Among the very few exceptions to such a rule, the greatest is *Adonais*. In the English language only *Lycidas* competes with it; and when we prefer *Adonais* to *Lycidas*, we are following the precedent set in the case of Cicero:[1] *Adonais* is the longer." The reason given for the preference is adroit, but I wonder if subconsciously it was influenced by the fact that *Lycidas* is in part a tract against the Church to which Mr. Thompson belonged. Mr. Symonds is another writer who is loth to put *Adonais* second. "It is," he says, "equalled in our language only by *Lycidas*, and in the point of passionate eloquence even superior to Milton's youthful lament for his friend."

[1] The reference is presumably to Pliny's letter to Tacitus (i. 20), in which the question of copiousness *versus* conciseness is discussed. Pliny says, To "a learned and judicious person of my acquaintance, who admires nothing so much in the eloquence of the bar as conciseness," I name ". . . above all, Cicero, whose longest oration is generally esteemed the best. It is in good compositions, as in everything else that is valuable: the more there is of them the better."

There are poets' poets, of whom Spenser is generally given as the chief; and so also there are poets' poems—poems, that is, which appeal to a poet more than to the ordinary critic or the general reader. The general verdict places *Paradise Lost* far above *Paradise Regained.* The only readers who would dissent are, I suppose, those who, having little taste for Milton's epics, prefer the one which is so much the shorter. Milton himself is sometimes quoted as preferring the later poem, but he is not reported as saying quite that. What his biographer says is that the poet could not with patience hear *Paradise Regained* mentioned as inferior to its predecessor; and this, says Mark Pattison, "looks like the old man's fondness for his youngest and weakest offspring." Few critics will go further in appreciation than was said by Ruskin, who saw in the poem "an exact parallel to Turner's latest pictures — the mind failing altogether, but with irregular intervals and return of power, exquisite momentary passages and lines." He gives as an instance some lines from the fourth book:

> And higher yet the glorious temple reared
> Her pile far off appearing, like a mount
> Of alabaster, topt with golden spires.

Yet there are poets who have extolled *Paradise Regained* not for its purple passages here and there, but as a whole. Coleridge said that "in its kind it is the most perfect poem extant," and

Wordsworth thought it "the most perfect in execution of anything written by Milton." Wordsworth's theory of poetry might naturally have led him to think that Milton when unadorned was adorned the most.

The poets cannot be accepted, then, as infallible judges of their own work. And now a further doubt may reasonably assail us; for sometimes, when the poet-critics agree in extolling some other poet, they differ widely in their judgement of what it is that is admirable in him. Mr. Aubrey de Vere had a delightful anecdote on this subject.

"Read the exquisite songs of Burns," said Tennyson; "in shape, each of them has the perfection of the berry; in light, the radiance of the berry: you forget for its sake those stupid things, his serious pieces." The same day Mr. de Vere met Wordsworth, who praised Burns even more vehemently than Tennyson had done, but ended, "Of course I refer to his serious efforts, such as *The Cotter's Saturday Night*; those foolish little amatory songs of his one has to forget." Mr. de Vere told the tale that evening to Sir Henry Taylor, the author of *Philip van Artevelde*, and his answer was that Burns's songs and serious efforts were to him alike tedious and disagreeable reading. "So much for the infallibility of poets in their own art."

The question may be brought to a further test. Upon the greatest names the poet-critics are agreed. There are, it is true, a few cases in which innate lack of sympathy or national preconception has caused a poet to differ from the world's judgement about the greatest names. Scott confessed his inability to find pleasure in Dante. Voltaire put Shakespeare as much too low as he put Pope too high, and both judgements are easily understandable. Shakespeare, as Carlyle said, "had really almost no Parisian *bon goût* whatever, and walked through the rules, so often as he saw good, with the most astonishing tranquillity." And Pope in many ways so much resembled Voltaire that it is not surprising to hear Voltaire pronounce him "the best poet of England."[1] Such judgements are worth notice as showing that the poet-critics are not always free, even in dealing with their greatest peers, from the prepossessions which may beset other critics. Still, on the whole, the poets whom the world deems the greatest have been similarly acclaimed by the poet-critics, and it is these latter who have done them the worthiest justice. But are the judgements of the poets to be trusted about the doubtful cases? It is here that Tennyson finds fault with the critics, as being swayed by every gust :

[1] Compare Byron's letter to Moore (May 3, 1821): "As to Pope, I have always regarded him as the greatest name in our poetry. Depend upon it the rest are barbarians."

> This thing, that thing is the rage
> Helter-skelter runs the age.
> . . . . . .
> What is true at last will tell :
> Few at first will place thee well ;
> Some too low would have thee shine,
> Some too high—no fault of thine—
> Hold thine own, and work thy will.

Are the poets more steadfast and more quickly just than the critics? Take the case of Keats, who might seem to be a poets' poet. Byron was almost wholly insensitive of the genius of Keats, whose work he dismissed as that of a puling sentimentalist. "No more Keats, I entreat," he wrote to Murray in 1820; "flay him alive; if some of you don't, I must skin him myself: there is no bearing the drivelling idiotism of the Mankin." And flay him he did, in epigrams, essays, and letters, with much in the letters that is veiled by a decent editor behind asterisks. But Byron, as he admits in a manuscript note to one of the essays, was prejudiced by Keats's depreciation of Pope.[1] He admitted that *Hyperion* was a fine fragment, but he said to Medwin that he was always battling with Shelley about Keats: "I wonder what he finds to make a god of in that idol of the Cockneys; besides, I always ask Shelley why he does not follow his style, and make himself one of the school if he thinks it so divine. He will, like me, return some day to admire Pope,

[1] In the early piece called "Sleep and Poetry."

and think the *Rape of the Lock* and its sylphs worth fifty *Endymions*, with their faun and satyr machinery."

Shelley himself, though pity for a poet's untimely death inspired a splendid elegy, was slow to appreciate the work of Keats and never idolised it, as might from Byron's conversation be supposed. When *Endymion* reached Shelley in Italy a year after its publication, he told Ollier that much praise was due to him for having read it, "the author's intention appearing to be that no person should possibly get to the end of it." He admitted, however, that the piece contained some of the highest and finest gleams of poetry, and gave the surest promise of ultimate excellence. When he hoped to be allowed to befriend the sick poet, "I am aware," he wrote, "in part that I am nourishing a rival who will far surpass me, and this is an additional motive, and will be an added pleasure." To the end it was promise rather than accomplishment that he saw in Keats. He did indeed say, "If the *Hyperion* be not grand poetry, none has been produced by our contemporaries," but he added, "His other poems are worth little." The other poems thus dismissed included the great Odes.

Landor placed his contemporaries in this order, (1) Southey, (2) Wordsworth, (3) Shelley. To Byron he hardly gave a place at all, saying of him that "there are things in him strong as poison,

and original as sin." This was a tit-for-tat for Byron's

> And that deep-mouthed Bœotian Savage Landor
> Has taken for a swan rogue Southey's gander.

Byron's own order of contemporary poets is worse than Landor's. In his "Gradus ad Parnassum" he put Scott at the apex as "undoubtedly the Monarch"; Rogers next; then Moore and Campbell bracketed in the third place; Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge in the next grade; and "The Many" below. Southey is placed, it will be seen, in good company, but the list was drawn up before the literary squabble which produced Byron's terrific *Vision of Judgment.*

The poets as critics are, it must be feared, as irritable as other men. We see the justice of Mark Pattison's saying when we pass to a later group of poets and note their judgements of each other. And there is another point which has to be remembered. A poet, when he takes to criticism, may find it harder to be disinterested than an outside critic; and even if his judgement is not deflected by personal considerations, he may feel himself tongue-tied by the fear that his motives will be suspected. This fear was avowed by Matthew Arnold. It would seem that he did not really set much store by Tennyson, but he was chary of references to the more popular poet in anything which he himself published. It is

only, so far as I remember, in the lectures *On Translating Homer* that he let the world know what he thought about Tennyson, and that was far from his whole mind. Yet, so far as it went, how good the criticism is! "Mr. Tennyson is a most distinguished and charming poet; but the very essential characteristic of his poetry is, it seems to me, an extreme subtlety and curious elaborateness of thought, an extreme subtlety and curious elaborateness of expression. . . . In Mr. Tennyson's poetry it is all distilled thought in distilled words." In the private letters which Mr. Russell printed we learn what further thoughts Arnold had about Tennyson, and why he did not give them to the world. "Is it possible," he wrote to Mr. Dykes Campbell, "for one who has himself published verses to print a criticism on Tennyson in which perfect freedom shall be used? And without perfect freedom what is a criticism worth? I do not think Tennyson a great and powerful spirit in any line — as Goethe was in the line of modern thought, Wordsworth in that of contemplation, Byron even in that of passion; and unless a poet, especially a poet at this time of day, is that, my interest in him is only slight, and my conviction that he will not finally stand high is firm. But is it possible or proper for me to say this about Tennyson, when my saying it would inevitably be attributed to odious motives?" The

perfectly free criticism was sacrificed to the fear that it would be attributed to the disagreement between two of a trade. In one case there was a competition between their wares which caused Arnold much vexation. "I am rather troubled to find," he wrote to his mother, "that Tennyson is at work on a subject, the story of the Latin poet Lucretius, which I have been occupied with for some twenty years. I was going to make a tragedy out of it, and the worst of it is that every one, except the few friends who have known that I had it in hand, will think I borrowed the subject from him. So far from this, I suspect the subject was put into his head by P——, who knew I was busy with it. I shall probably go on with it, however, but it is annoying, the more so as I cannot possibly go on at present so as to be ready this year, but must wait till next." The letter was written in 1866. The next year came. Tennyson's piece was not yet published, and Arnold's was still not ready. Perhaps this was why in his *New Poems*, published in 1867, he prefixed to *Thyrsis* the following lines:

> Thus yesterday, to-day, to-morrow come,
> They hustle one another and they pass:
> But all our hustling morrows only make
> The smooth to-day of God.
>
> From *Lucretius*, an unpublished Tragedy.

But if this hint were meant to peg out a claim, the innocent device did not succeed, for Tennyson's

poem appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine* of May 1868. Arnold's Tragedy has never seen the light, and in the next edition of his Poems he buried his vexation by withdrawing the lines quoted above. What Arnold thought of his poetry in relation to that of Tennyson and the other chief poet of the day is told in a letter of 1869 to his mother. "My poems represent, on the whole, the main movement of mind of the last quarter of a century, and thus they will probably have their day as people become conscious to themselves of what that movement of mind is, and interested in the literary productions which reflect it. It might be fairly urged that I have less poetical sentiment than Tennyson, and less intellectual vigour and abundance than Browning; yet, because I have perhaps more of a fusion of the two than either of them, and have more regularly applied that fusion to the main line of modern development, I am likely enough to have my turn, as they have had theirs." His turn did come and has not passed away, and the claim he made for himself is more modest than it may seem to some readers. The essential value of poetry does not depend upon its reflection of main lines of development, and no one has put this fact more clearly than Arnold himself in the opening chapter of the second series of his *Essays in Criticism*, where he distinguishes between the "historical," the "personal," and the "real" values of poetry.

Arnold was not alone in thinking that the future lay with another poet than Tennyson or Browning. "I hear from every one," wrote Patmore to William Allingham, "that your notice of the *Angel* is everything that the most praiseworthy poet could desire. The only thing I regret is that when I have the opportunity of doing you a like service, it may look like returning the compliment. . . . Are you about anything serious? I hope you are. The future belongs to you and me and Matthew Arnold (who has written a great little epic called the Death of Balder), unless we are lazy." One need not take the inclusion of Allingham in this list very seriously: it was just a beginning of returning the compliment, but the inclusion of Arnold meant the exclusion of Tennyson and Browning. Tennyson was at first the poet of Patmore's idolatry, but in later years he could not reckon Tennyson among the truly great poets. "He is of course an immortal. No one ever wrote so well on his own line. But he did very little which seems to me to have been greatly conceived or passionately and deeply felt." The altered point of view followed upon a rift in the lute of friendship between the two poets. Patmore's biographer has told very fully the story of an estrangement due to Patmore's quickness to take offence (one has only to look at Sargent's portrait to find that trait in him), and, secondarily, to Tennyson's slowness to be bothered about the

business. Of Browning, Patmore was frankly inappreciative. "I find the brilliant thinking and the deep feeling in Browning, but no true individuality"—a curious judgement. Another *obiter dictum* is familiar enough. "Browning," wrote Patmore, "has nearly every poetic faculty—except that of writing poetry—in an eminent degree. But as a pie must have a crust, and a good pie must have a good crust, so a good poem must have, not merely worthy contents, but a beautiful exterior." Not a very profound piece of criticism, as every one who can taste Browning at all will agree. But I am not sure that Tennyson's real opinion was not much the same as Patmore's. Tennyson and Browning were old and attached friends; each went to hear the other read a new poem; they exchanged volumes as they came out, sent due compliments after receipt, and dedicated a work each to other—Browning, the first volume of his *Selections* "To Alfred Tennyson. In poetry illustrious and consummate, In friendship noble and sincere"; and Tennyson, his *Tiresias* "To my good friend Robert Browning whose genius and geniality will best appreciate what may be best, and make most allowance for what may be worst." Browning was always whole-hearted in his admiration; was loud in praise of *The Cup*; pronounced *Harold* "a great work, wise, good, and beautiful"; and in *Queen Mary* could "see nowhere the shade of a fault." Tennyson's letters to Browning show

more restraint. He acknowledges a book while his wife is still cutting the leaves, or rides off on generalities about his friend's prolific muse. The reason is made clear by pieces of Tennyson's table-talk which have been recorded. "There are only two intelligible lines in *Sordello*—the first and the last, and each is a lie."[1] "Browning seldom attempts the marriage of sense with sound, although he shows a spontaneous felicity in the adaptation of words to ideas and feelings. He has a mighty intellect, but sometimes I cannot read him. He has plenty of music in him, but he cannot get it out." Did no music get itself out, then, in *Saul*, or *A Woman's Last Word*, or *Love among the Ruins*? And besides there is music and music. Browning, it has been said, "once compared himself to Beethoven, and the comparison holds, for such a poem as *Abt Vogler* is Beethovenesque in its vast and tranquillising harmony, in its nobly sustained, yet nobly restrained, passion."[2] Such analogies between masters in sister-arts are often interesting, says Francis Thompson, adding the question, "In some respects, is not Brahms the Browning of music?"

Rossetti was a good critic of poetry, for he

[1] The first :

Who will may hear Sordello's story told.

The last :

Who would has heard Sordello's story told.

[2] "Did Browning Whistle or Sing?" a paper by F. M. Padelford in the *Cornhill Magazine*, April 1909.

had power of thought and humour, and his *obiter dicta* in this sort would be well worth collection.[1] How good, for instance, is this: "Poetry should seem to the hearer to have been always present to his thought, but never heard before." He admired Shelley, but saw the weak point—as in this comparison: "Keats hardly died so much too early—not at all if there had been any danger of his taking to the modern habit eventually—treating material as product, and shooting it all out as it comes. Of course, however, he wouldn't; he was getting always choicer and simpler, and my favourite piece in his works is *La Belle Dame sans Merci*—I suppose about his last. As to Shelley, it is really a mercy that he has not been hatching yearly universes till now. He might, I suppose; for his friend Trelawny still walks the earth without great-coat, stockings, or underclothing, this Christmas (1879)." Among the poets, his contemporaries, Rossetti placed Browning first, ranking him, indeed, next to Shakespeare, but at one time he seems to have given a place almost as high to Mrs. Browning. "The piece of news freshest to my mind," he wrote to William Allingham in 1856, "is *Aurora Leigh*—an astounding work, surely. You said nothing of it. I know that St. Francis and Poverty do not wed in these days of St. James' Church, with rows of portrait figures on either side,

[1] Mr. A. C. Benson has collected a few of them in his monograph in the "English Men of Letters" series.

and the corners neatly finished with angels. I know that if a blind man were to enter the room this evening and talk to me for some hours, I should, with the best intentions, be in danger of twigging his blindness before the right moment came, if such there were, for the chord in the orchestra and the proper theatrical start ; yet with all my knowledge I have felt something like a bug ever since reading *Aurora Leigh*. Oh, the wonder of it ! and oh, the bore of writing about it ! " But he returned to it. " Be sure," he wrote, " to talk to me about *Aurora Leigh*." And in recording the beauty of Burne-Jones's designs, " they quite put one to shame," he said, " so full are they of everything—*Aurora Leighs* of art." Mrs. Browning's poem—the most mature of her works, she said—has in these days been as much underrated as at one time it was overpraised, but Rossetti's judgement of it will hardly stand. It is sad to know that between Robert Browning and him there was in the days of Rossetti's hypochondria a personal estrangement. When *Fifine at the Fair* appeared, Rossetti formed the delusion that a passage at the end of that casuistical monologue was meant to refer to a supposed incident in his life, and Browning was added to the list of his unwitting enemies. As another " conspirator " was Lewis Carroll, whose *Hunting of the Snark*, published about the same time, was taken as a pasquinade against the poet, it will be seen how sadly Rossetti's judge-

ment had been overthrown. Happily these delusions came too late to pervert his considered opinions.

Swinburne was often a good critic both in verse and in prose, and he was a splendidly generous praiser. The worst of him is that he sometimes took back his words. In the essay on *William Blake* (1868) it was said of Walt Whitman's poems that "in breadth of outline and charm of colour they recall the work of Blake; and to neither poet can a higher tribute of honest praise be paid than this." Three years later, in *Songs before Sunrise*, Whitman was apostrophised as—

> Strong-winged soul with prophetic
> Lips hot with the bloodbeats of song,
> With tremor of heartstrings magnetic,
> With thoughts as thunders in throng,
> With consonant ardours of chords
> That pierce men's souls as with swords
> And hale them hearing along,

and was exhorted to

> Send but a song oversea for us,
> Heart of their hearts who are free,
> Heart of their singer, to be for us
> More than our singing can be.

But presently the songs from oversea were flung away as worthy only of "a drunken apple-woman, indecently sprawling in the slush and garbage of the gutter amid the rotten refuse of her overturned fruit-stall," or of "a Hottentot wench

under the influence of cantharides and adulterated rum." In the chapter (written in 1887) of *Studies in Prose and Poetry*, from which I quote, Mr. Swinburne averred that he had "no palinode to chant, no recantation to intone"; but he forgot that he was now lampooning some of the very pieces which he had formerly, in language as emphatic, extolled. In 1868 there was "no poem or passage in Blake" so faultless and so noble as Whitman's *Voice out of the Sea*, or as his dirge over President Lincoln—"the most sweet and sonorous nocturn ever chanted in the church of the world." In 1887 lines from that famous—and, as I shall still call it, glorious—piece were ironically cited as "a sample of the dulcet rhymes which a most tragic occasion succeeded in invoking from the orotund oratist of Manhattan," and were dismissed with an expression of horror and an intimation that Mr. Swinburne now preferred Catnach—the publisher of chap-books in Seven Dials—to Whitman. Mr. Swinburne's biographer attributes what he frankly calls "the essay of recantation" to "the slow tyranny exercised on Swinburne's judgment by the will of Watts-Dunton," who hated Whitman most heartily. This explanation accords with the general thesis of Mr. Gosse's entertaining book, but freedom to change his mind need not wholly be denied to the captive, who had at least this justification, that his own excess of praise had led to what he called "Whitmania" in imitators. Mr.

Swinburne's change of front towards another of his contemporaries seems clearly to have been due to personal prejudice of another sort. I have quoted above his praise of Matthew Arnold's *Thyrsis*. It is one of many tributes paid in Swinburne's earlier essays to the poet and the critic. "I have never written," he said, "and never mean to write, an irreverent word of Mr. Arnold's own claims to all due deference and all reasonable regard, whether as poet or critic." Those claims in both sorts were put very high. He was "a noble poet and a brilliant critic." "His best essays ought to live longer than most; his best poems cannot but live as long as any of their time." *Thyrsis* was "unsurpassable certainly; it may be unattainable." "Other and older poets were to the full as vivid, as incisive, and impressive, but no one has in like measure the tender and final quality of touch" which with other qualities "assured for him his high and distinct seat among English poets." Some years passed, and in an essay on Dickens all was changed. Even the slighter pieces of that writer "sufficed for a fame great enough to deserve the applause and the thanksgiving of all men worthy to acclaim it, and the contempt of such a Triton of the minnows as Matthew Arnold. A man whose main achievement in creative literature was to make himself by painful painstaking into a sort of pseudo-Wordsworth could pay no other tribute than that of

stolid scorn to a genius of such inexhaustible force and such indisputable originality as that of Charles Dickens. It is not always envy, I hope and believe, which disables and stupefies such brilliant and versatile examples of the minor poet and the minor critic when appreciation of anything new and great is found impossible for their self-complacent and self-centred understanding to attain." The attack was, it will have been seen, spatchcocked in, and was made, unlike the praises which it recanted, when Arnold was dead. What did it mean? An explanation suggested tentatively in the press at the time[1] is accepted by Mr. Gosse, and indeed the phrase "pseudo-Wordsworth" settles the matter. In the *Letters of Matthew Arnold*, printed after his death, the editor had allowed himself to print, from letters never intended for publication, some far from cordial expressions about Swinburne. Writing to his mother in 1863, Arnold had described a dinner with Monckton Milnes, at which other guests had been "G. Lewes, Herbert Spencer, a sort of pseudo-Shelley called Swinburne, and so on." And again in 1882, when Swinburne had sent him a copy of *Tristram of Lyonesse*, Arnold had written to a friend, "Swinburne's fatal habit of using one hundred words where one would suffice always offends me, and I have not yet faced his

[1] See the *Westminster Gazette* of August 2, 1902. The paper on Dickens had appeared in the then current number of the *Quarterly*.

poem, but I must try it soon." Perhaps the fact that this was a poem on a subject already treated by Arnold himself had something to do with his reluctance. And perhaps, too, Arnold had written in not the same sense to the poet, who may have been further annoyed by learning that Arnold had instinctively shrunk from a poem which the general reader had found, as Mr. Gosse notes, to lack vital interest. However this may be, from the moment when Swinburne came upon the letters they "turned all his long admiration for Arnold to gall and hatred," and an occasion was made to revenge "pseudo-Shelley" by "pseudo-Wordsworth." I do not know whether in private letters or talk Tennyson or Browning ever uttered a passing word of disrespect about Swinburne. At any rate none such has been recorded. Tennyson was reported as saying of Swinburne that he was "a reed through which all things blow into music," and a letter of Browning's has been published in which, describing a dinner at Oxford, he spoke of "praise having been given very deservedly to Swinburne." The praises bestowed by Swinburne upon Tennyson and Browning were never recanted, as were those, once hardly less lavish, upon Matthew Arnold.

*Tantaene animis celestibus irae?* Can there be such anger in heavenly minds? Very easily, I fear. The "sacred" poets, as Tennyson called them, remain men for all their inspiration, and, as

old Horace said, are the most irritable tribe of the human race. One turns with relief to Sir Walter Scott, who becomes the more lovable the more one knows of him. On Sunday evenings it was his constant practice to read aloud some favourite author for the amusement or edification of his little circle,—Shakespeare, it might be, or Dryden, or Beaumont and Fletcher, or Johnson, or Joanna Baillie. "Of the poets, his contemporaries, however," adds Lockhart, "there was not one that did not come in for his part. In Wordsworth, his pet pieces were, I think, the Song for Brougham Castle, the Laodamia, and some of the early sonnets:—in Southey, Queen Orraca, Fernando Ramirez, the Lines on the Holly Tree—and, of his larger poems, the Thalaba. Crabbe was perhaps, next to Shakespeare, the standing resource; but in those days Byron was pouring out his spirit fresh and full; and, if a new piece from his hand had appeared, it was sure to be read by Scott the Sunday evening afterwards, and that with such delighted emphasis, as showed how completely the elder bard had kept all his enthusiasm for poetry at the pitch of youth, all his admiration of genius free, pure, and unstained by the least drop of literary jealousy." We may agree or disagree with Scott in his choice of favourites, but who will not admire his freshness of outlook, his width of sympathy, his freedom from all affectation, backbiting, or jealousy?

"Rare and beautiful example," says Lockhart, "of a happily constituted and virtuously disciplined mind and character." And perhaps character has something to do with the making of critics.

# VI

## A SHORT STUDY IN WORDS

*I think you are to make use of your authority as Censor, and by an annual "Index Expurgatorius" expunge all words and phrases that are offensive to good sense.*—SWIFT, *in "The Tatler."*

*Johnson was at all times jealous of infractions upon the genuine English language, and prompt to repress colloquial barbarisms.*—BOSWELL.

*One of the most important of all the sides of literary study is its effect as helping to preserve the dignity and purity of the English language. That noble instrument has never been exposed to such dangers as those which beset it to-day.*—LORD MORLEY.

THESE and other such words of warning uttered in successive ages by masters of literature came into my mind as I read a passage in Mr. Kipling's *A Diversity of Creatures.* The passage is in the chapter on "Regulus" to which other reference is made on preceding pages. A schoolmaster and his class are translating the ode of Horace, and they come to the lines where Regulus

> Nerved the fathers' weak intent,
> And, girt by friends that mourn'd him, sped
> Into illustrious banishment.

"Can you suggest anything," asks the master, "for *egregius exsul*? Only 'egregious exile'? I fear *egregious* is a good word ruined. No! You can't in this case improve on Conington." A good word ruined—*egregious* meaning properly renowned in honour, as in Marlowe,

> Egregious viceroys of these eastern parts,

but now degraded by ironical use into "outrageous" or "ridiculous." Mr. Kipling's passage set me thinking first, of the decline and fall of other good words; and next, of some words and phrases which are badly misused in common talk and writing. Lord Morley's concern in the discourse from which I have quoted was for the dignity of the English language, but there is more than that in the dangers to which he refers. A slovenly use of language may lead to confusion in administration, and an equivocal use of words to misconception in policy.

Every one can think of familiar words which have been emptied of their proper meaning, in order to serve as mere intensives or expletives, and so have been "ruined" for literary use. A modern poet would be chary of writing, like Marston, of "the graver statesmen whispering fearfully"; or of saying, with Shelley, "I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar." Another large class of ruined words is of those which have been perverted from their original meaning to something less precise. According to

Archbishop Trench, the word in the English language which has in this way been treated worst is *idea*. And perhaps, if we contrast the height of its original meaning with the level of its common use to-day, this is so. Infinite is the fall from an idea in the Platonic sense of an eternally existing pattern or archetype, of which some visible thing is the imperfect copy, to the present use, when this person "has an idea that the train has started," and the other "had no idea that the dinner would be so bad."[1] Matters have not mended since the time of Dr. Johnson who, as Boswell tells us (Sept. 23, 1777), "was particularly indignant against the almost universal use of the word *idea*, in the sense of *notion* or *opinion*, when it is clear that *idea* can only signify something of which an image can be formed in the mind. We may have an *idea* or *image* of a mountain, a tree, a building; but we cannot surely have an *idea* or *image* of an *argument* or *proposition*. Yet we hear the sages of the law 'delivering their *ideas* upon the question under consideration'; and the first speakers in parliament 'entirely coinciding in the *idea* which has been ably stated by an honourable member.'" Milton, singing of the Creator beholding his new-created world,

[1] This is Trench's illustration, and it reminds me of a story told by Mr. George Russell. The Archbishop, who was somewhat absent-minded, had revisited Dublin to stay with his successor. "I am afraid, my dear," he said to Mrs. Trench across the table at dinner, "that we must put this cook down among our failures."

describes

> how it showed
> In prospect from his throne, how good, how fair,
> Answering his great idea.

But "John P. Robinson he" would have an "idee" that they didn't know everything down in Judaea. "There is no word in the whole compass of the language," says Trench, "which is so seldom employed with any tolerable correctness; in none is the distance so immense between what properly it means, and the slovenly uses which popularly it is made to serve." The distance is, as the Archbishop says, immense between the first sense and the current uses, but if the reader turns up the article *idea* in the Dictionary, he will find that the descent was made, not in one wanton leap, but through a long series of gradual changes in meaning.

A like process has been the fate of other philosophical words. A familiar instance is *phenomenon*, *phenomenal*. Properly the terms mean what is perceived or observed; or in more strict philosophical use, that of which the senses directly take note—an immediate object of perception, as distinct from what some philosophers call the only realities or things in themselves. Writers of exact English continue to use the terms in their proper sense—as, for instance, Ruskin in *Modern Painters*: "I shall often be obliged, in the present portion of the work, to enter somewhat tediously

into the physical causes of phenomena"; or Huxley in his *Physiography*: "Every one is familiar with the common phenomena of a piece of metal being eaten away by rust." But, in vulgar parlance, the terms have been perverted from meaning ordinary objects of sense to mean on the contrary something unusual or prodigious. I suppose that it was Dickens who popularised the new usage, though the perversion had begun before his *Nicholas Nickleby* appeared. "This, sir," said Mr. Vincent Crummles, bringing the maiden forward, "this is the infant phenomenon—Miss Ninetta Crummles." The language of the showman has triumphed, and now we have even a scholarly writer saying of a certain poet that "he had a great sense of diction and an almost phenomenal vocabulary." *Almost phenomenal* is a phrase which really should not have been used in collocation with *a great sense of diction.*

Political, no less than philosophical, words often suffer change into something new and strange. In these days whenever it is asked what something will bring in (for even in these days of thinking in millions the question is sometimes put), the Minister in naming a figure adds that "this is a *conservative* estimate." What is meant thereby is an estimate which is purposely low. Why, then, conservative? What does such an estimate conserve? Even Liberal politicians adopt the expression, though in the old days a Conserva-

tive estimate was in their mouths an estimate that was "swollen" or "bloated." What was the origin of the new use, and when did it come in? The Oxford Dictionary for once fails me, the "Concise" and more recent edition having to content itself with a bare notice of the use as "improper." Was it the subtle invention of some politician, designed to wipe out the Gladstonian charges against the Conservatives, and connected with the term "Moderate" by which Conservatives called themselves in London politics? In this sphere the charge of the Liberals or Progressives is generally that the estimates of their opponents are too low.

A phrase of the politicians of to-day, which is palpably "improper," is *only too*. As used by many of them, it has either no meaning at all, or a meaning precisely the opposite of their real intent. Strictly used, the phrase means that something is, for instance, "only too true," *i.e.* that the truth is more than is desirable, or than might be expected; or that some one is "only too glad," or ready, to do or say this or that, *i.e.* more glad or ready than, if circumstances were different, he would or should be. The Dictionary cites such passages, in illustration of the correct use, as Jane Austen's, "I loved her only too well," *i.e.* not wisely but too well. But as used to-day, the words are deprived of any intelligible meaning, and are merely a verbose equivalent for *very*.

Thus, I read the other day that a Member rose to say that he "was only too glad to second the motion." It was obvious from the context that he saw no reason whatever why his gladness should be wrong; he merely meant that he was unfeignedly glad. Speakers who fall into this slovenly diction may care to know that according to the Dictionary the *only* and the *too* came into use as "an emotional feminine colloquialism," and that the first recorded instance of it was in a story by the authoress of *Bootle's Baby*: "Mrs. Trafford will only be too glad to come and pay you a visit." "I shall be only too pleased." The exchange of compliments was perfectly innocent, and neither lady was more pleased or glad than she should have been. Mr. Bonar Law, when he was rebuked by Mr. Smillie for uttering "a threat" against the miners, said modestly that he did not pretend to be an expert in the use of words, but that to the best of his knowledge what he had said could not rightly be termed a threat. But he ought to know better than to use *only too* in the emotional, feminine way. When discussing matters with the Triple Alliance, he declined to concede a certain point because it involved trade unions for which Mr. Thomas was not empowered to speak. "If you could come here," said Mr. Law, "and speak, or come with others, and speak for those in that position, the Government would be *only too willing* to have direct negotiations with

them."[1] He meant very, or quite, willing, not too willing. Do not let it be said that such criticism is like Professor Crooklyn in *The Egoist*, of whom Mrs. Mountstuart remarked, "He pores over a little inexactitude in phrases, and pecks at it like a domestic fowl." Mr. Bonar Law should really be more careful, or his words will be brought up against him. It is certain hotheads on the employers' side who say that the Government are too willing to negotiate instead of fighting.

Another, and a more common, cause of the ruin of good words is mere ignorance. The history of the word *transpire* is an interesting case in point. Every scholar must be irritated by the use of the phrase, now common, and by no means confined to journalese, *it transpired that*, when nothing more is meant by it than *it was stated that*, or *it was ascertained that*. To transpire means, as every schoolboy knows, to breathe through, and the verb is rightly used either transitively or intransitively—as by Mr. Arnold Bennett in *Old Wives' Tales*, "The air was heavy with the natural human odour which young children transpire"; or, intransitively, by Herrick in *Hesperides*,

> This, that, and ev'ry thicket doth transpire
> More sweet than storax from the hallowed fire.

Such is the primary sense. Secondarily, by a happy figure, the word came to be used of something that becomes known by being whispered, or

[1] *Times*, March 24, 1919.

by somebody getting wind of it. Thus Richardson, in *Charles Grandison*, says, "Can he have so many love-secrets, and yet will not let them transpire to such a Sister?" Scholarly writers use the word correctly, but a modern reporter will say in summarising a piece of evidence in open court that "it transpired" that such or such was the case—thus perverting the true sense of the word. So, too, at a recent meeting of the Mining Institute of Scotland, a speaker said, "Since the last meeting of the Institute events had transpired which would probably have a very marked effect on the coal industry."[1] He was referring to the proceedings at Mr. Justice Sankey's Commission, where statements were not so much whispered as shouted. The Dictionary traces this corruption of the language to American usage, but it must be admitted that English writers make themselves parties to the crime. The corruption "evidently arose," says the Dictionary, "from misunderstanding such a sentence as 'What had transpired during his absence he did not know.'" Some one who was innocent of Latin supposed it meant what had taken place, and so in Webster's Dictionary the word was defined as "To happen or come to pass." This definition reminds me to enter a humble remonstrance against the growing use of the word *happenings* in senses from which all suggestion of hap or chance is absent. Why deprive

[1] *Times*, April 8, 1919.

the word of its true and distinctive meaning, when *events* or *occurrences* are at hand? I think that the Censor imagined by Swift should put his ban upon *the day's happenings*.

Ruskin has an often-quoted passage about what he calls masked words. "There never were creatures of prey so mischievous, never diplomatists so cunning, never poisoners so deadly, as these masked words; they are the unjust stewards of all men's ideas: whatever fancy or favourite instinct a man most cherishes he gives to his favourite masked word to take care of for him; the word at last comes to have an infinite power over him,—you cannot get at him but by its ministry." In times of turmoil the power of such words is raised to the highest point, and every reader will find instances as he looks over the world to-day.[1] There are uses of words, too, which may be described as usurpations. They usurp for some special sense of their own the whole power of a word which rightfully belongs to a much wider field of meaning.

Among the usurpers are three which in these days have had some influence on questions relating, severally, to economics, politics, and education. The first is *labour*. The word in its proper meaning has a large content, covering any exertion

[1] The Speaker, at the Royal Academy banquet, gave as instances of catch-words of the day, *reconstruction* and *nationalisation* (*Times*, May 4, 1919). If Mr. Lowther had been a delegate at the Peace Conference, he would doubtless have added *self-determination*.

of the human faculties, whether bodily or mental, which is accompanied by exhausting effort. Ruskin gives some suggestive definitions of the word. "Labour is the contest of the life of man with an opposite—the term 'life' including his intellect, soul, and physical power, contending with question, difficulty, trial, or material force. . . . Literally, it is the quantity of lapse, loss, or failure of human life caused by any effort. It is usually confused with effort itself, but there is much effort which is merely a mode of recreation, or of pleasure. The most beautiful actions of the human body, and the highest results of the human intelligence, are conditions, or achievements, of quite unlaborious,—nay, of recreative,—effort. But labour is the suffering in effort. . . . In brief, it is that quantity of our toil which we die in." Ruskin's distinction between *labour* and *effort* is not always adopted, but every accurate Political Economist makes the word *labour* include mental or nervous exertion as well as physical. At the beginning of his *Principles of Political Economy* Mill gives an exhaustive account of the different kinds of labour requisite to production, and as many of them are mental as physical. In modern use, however, the word came to be applied specifically to manual labour, though, indeed, in all or nearly all such labour there is a mental element. Labour came to be used—in such connections as "The Claims of Labour," "The Labour Party,"

"Labour in Parliament"—for the artisans and unskilled workers only. The part was taken for the whole, and under this mask the word encouraged many fallacies, prejudices, and misconceptions. As, however, the ambitions and power of the Labour Party increased, it was decided to cast a wider net, and the meaning of the word "Labour" was extended. In the new Constitution, adopted on February 26, 1918, "The Labour Party" was thrown open to every worker who labours "by hand or by brain."

Another instance of misconception caused by the narrowing of a word's meaning is afforded by *business*. Originally the word comprehended any duty or occupation or purpose on which a person was engaged. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" "Mind your own business." "What is everybody's business is nobody's." We need not go through all the specialised senses which the word has taken on in the course of its history. Quite low down in the list given in the Dictionary comes one of these senses which now threatens to supersede all the rest. If one asked the man in the street to-day what he meant by business, he would certainly reply *trade* or *commerce*. So *man of business* has come to mean a man thus engaged, and *business-like* to mean those qualities or methods suitable to trade or commerce. And hence perhaps comes

the modern call for *business-men* to undertake the business of governing the country. Some of those thus called in have been more and some less successful—a fact which seems to show that after all the highest and most difficult of all businesses, that of government, requires aptitudes of its own. Who shall say how far the notion of business-men as a panacea for the body politic was due to the subtle hypnotism exercised upon thought by current words? The amusing thing is that the original sense of *man of business* was one engaged in public affairs—a sense which is now obsolete, though "Public Business" is still a Parliamentary term.

Another panacea which has sometimes been recommended is that men of science should rule. This notion had some vogue during the Great War, when it was alleged that the blockade was inefficient because Ministers had failed to realise aright the part played by cotton in the manufacture of explosives. The argument reminds me of the anecdote of Canning, who, on a country walk with John Hookham Frere, disclosed the fact that it was a new light to him that tadpoles turned into frogs. "Now," said Frere, in telling the tale, "don't you go and repeat that story of Canning to the next fool you meet. Canning could rule, and did rule, a great and civilised nation; but in these days people are apt to fancy that any one who does not know the natural history of frogs

must be an imbecile in the treatment of men."[1] Other things being equal, a Minister who knows about frogs and cotton is better than one who does not, and certainly, if the fact about cotton be as stated, some Minister or his expert adviser was sadly to blame; but this is a digression. I am here concerned only with words, and it is to the modern use of the term *men of science* that I invite attention. The word *science* has in common parlance usurped, in the interests of one branch of knowledge, a realm of meaning far wider. Science means primarily knowledge, and, secondarily, any branch of study which is systematically pursued. But in modern use it has come to be treated as synonymous with Natural and Physical Science; and by insidious association of ideas the methods and advantages of scientific study are supposed to be attainable only by the study of those particular sciences. Even the Universities, which ought to be guardians of correct language, have in these days fallen into the vulgar error. Ruskin has some passages on this subject, the violence of which may perhaps be justified, if at all, only by the daring nature of the verbal usurpation which they denounce. "The use of the word *scientia*, as if it differed from knowledge, is," he says, "a modern barbarism; enhanced usually by the

[1] *The Works of the Right Hon. John Hookham Frere, with a Memoir by Sir Bartle Frere*, vol. i. p. 17. An interesting remark on the anecdote may be found in Professor Dicey's *Law and Opinion in England*, 2nd ed. p. lxxvii.

assumption that the knowledge of the difference between acids and alkalies is a more respectable one than that of the difference between vice and virtue." And again: "It has become the permitted fashion among mathematicians, chemists, and apothecaries, to call themselves 'scientific men,' as opposed to theologians, poets, and artists. They know their sphere to be a separate one; but their ridiculous notion of its being a peculiarly scientific one ought not to be allowed in our Universities. There is a science of Morals, a science of History, a science of Grammar, a science of Music, and a science of Painting; and all these are quite beyond comparison higher fields for human intellect, and require accuracies of intenser observation, than either chemistry, electricity, or geology."[1] And he might have added, there is a science of Politics, and a science of Literature (though, to be sure, he may, in accordance with old usage, have meant to include the latter under "Grammar"). Much that Ruskin here says is disputable, and in any case such comparisons are unprofitable. His main contention, however, is clearly right. But exclusion in one direction provokes exclusion in another; and whereas the Universities now for the most part use the word *science* to mean the Natural and Physical sciences only, they used it of old time to mean only the studies for a degree

[1] *The Three Colours of Pre-Raphaelitism*, § 11; and *Ariadne Florentina*, § 149.

in "Humane Letters." Thus Mr. Gladstone, in recording his success in the examination for a degree in that School, says, "Examined by Stocker in divinity. I did not answer as I could have wished. Hampden in science; a beautiful examination, and with every circumstance in my favour. He said to me, 'Thank you, you have construed extremely well, and appear to be thoroughly acquainted with your books.'" Is it not time that a proper balance was restored and the word *science* used scientifically? Who shall say how much confusion of thought in educational affairs has been due to the verbal usurpation above described? It is not within the scope of this short study to discuss the vexed question of the several spheres in education of "Science" and Literature, for under those verbal banners is battle joined. But such use of the word *science* confuses the issue. Clear thinking is impossible without an exact use of words, and to promote such use is one of the functions of the science of literature.

## VII

## SINGLE-POEM POETS

I HAPPENED the other day to be reading the *Ion* of Plato, one of the shortest and not the least charming of his Dialogues. The characters are Ion and Socrates. Ion is a rhapsode or reciter, and Socrates is delighted to meet so elegant and distinguished a man. He has often envied the rhapsodes; for, like our own popular actors, they "always wear fine clothes and it is part of their profession to look as beautiful as they can." And then they keep such good company—the company of the great poets of old, and especially of the divine Homer. No one can be a good rhapsode unless he can interpret the mind of the poet whose words he recites. To understand Homer—or Shakespeare—and not merely to learn his words by rote is an accomplishment which Socrates greatly envies. The vanity of Ion rises to the bait. "That is true," he says, "and I believe I can speak about Homer better than any man, and you ought to hear me." Socrates promises himself that felicity on some future occasion, but meanwhile draws his

rhapsode out a little further. Does Ion's art extend to other poets than Homer? Oh no! He is like the actors who are above anything but "the legitimate"; and Homer is his only wear. Other and inferior poets are outside the range of his art. But how can that be? asks Socrates. He who can interpret the greater minds must surely also be able to cope with the lesser. Ion can find no answer that will pass muster; and, after further play, Socrates lands Ion in the predicament of having either to admit himself an impostor or else to grant that his success with Homer is the result not of art but of inspiration. Ion makes haste to assume the finer rôle and so the dialogue ends. Mrs. Shelley says that she "does not know why Shelley selected the *Ion* to translate"; but the reason was, no doubt, that though the piece is half jest, it contains also a serious contribution to Plato's theory of poetry as inspiration. In that part of the argument Socrates says this: "Tynnichus the Chalcidian affords a striking instance of what I am saying. He wrote nothing that any one would care to remember but the famous paean which is in every one's mouth. It is perhaps the most beautiful of songs, and it was composed without art, being, as he himself says, the invention of the Muses. For in this way the God seems to me to indicate, and not allow us to doubt, that these beautiful poems are not human, or the work of man, but

divine and the word of the Gods; and that the poets are only the interpreters of the Gods by whom they are severally possessed. Was not this the lesson which the God intended to teach when by the mouth of the worst of poets he sang the best of songs?" The once-famous paean has not come down to us; but this passage about it set me thinking what like instances I could remember in British poetry, and then led me to my shelves to look for others.

John Stuart Mill believed that any person of good ability can write poetry if he will. "Poetry," he says, "is natural to most persons at some period of their lives; and any one whose feelings are genuine, though but of average strength—if he be not diverted by uncongenial thoughts or occupations from the indulgence of them and if he acquires by cultivation (as all persons may) the faculty of delineating them correctly—has it in his power to be a poet." The qualifications of the general proposition are large, but even with them, is it true? Certainly the desire to write poetry is natural to most persons at some period of their lives. This has been observed not only of schoolgirls and boys at college, but in churchyard epitaphs, in reports of breach-of-promise cases, and of some unctuous criminals. The elder Mr. Weller held, it is true, that "Poetry's unnat'ral," and he "never know'd a respect-

able coachman as wrote it," but he had to make an exception of "one as made an affectin' copy o' verses the night afore he was hung for a highway robbery." Mr. Wegg, too, dropped into verse after clinching a good bargain. But these are not promising fields wherein to look for a British Tynnichus. Shall we find him, then, at the opposite end, where verse has been written, not of natural impulse, but on set subjects? There must be thousands of Single-Poem Poets among the competitors for prizes, but few prize poems have reached a high level. The best-known lines attributed to single-poem prize-poets are indeed legendary — such as those from "Nebuchadnezzar":

> Who murmured—as he ate the unaccustomed food—
> It may be wholesome, but it is not good,

or those from "The Prince of Wales's Illness" (1871):

> Flashed from his bed the electric tidings came,
> He is not better, he is much the same.

Lord Goschen's skit is nearer to the real thing. "You know the kind of thing," he said, "rhetoric in rhyme, grand, heroic, antithetical, alliterative—as in 'Belshazzar's Feast':

> Ho! bring the cups, the golden goblets bring;
> A godlike chalice for a godlike king.
> Bring forth the cups. 'Twould be a draught divine—
> In Hebrew vessels, Babylonian wine."

There have been a few cases in which a work by a true poet has been given the prize in these competitions. Such were, at Cambridge, Tennyson's "Timbuctoo," and, at Oxford, Matthew Arnold's "Cromwell"; but in neither case did the prize poem, though both were far above the average, show certain evidence of the poet's genius. Dean Stanley used to say that the best prize poem ever written was Dean Milman's "Apollo Belvidere." This, which won the prize at Oxford in 1812, has the merit of being one of the shortest, and contains some good lines—notably the last of the four which follow:

> Beauteous as vision seen in dreamy sleep
> By holy maid on Delphi's haunted steep,
> Mid the dim twilight of the laurel grove,
> Too fair to worship, too divine to love.

Stanley's own Newdigate (1837), *The Gipsies*, contains two good lines:

> They claim no thrones—they only ask to share
> The common liberty of earth and air.

Milman's poem must have been famous in its day, for Tennyson makes mention of it in a general statement which brushes all prize poems aside. "As you intend," he wrote to a publisher, "to reprint the Cambridge Prize Poems, it would seem odd to leave mine out, tho' for my own part I had much rather you had not thought of it. Prize Poems (without any exception even in favour

of Mr. Milman's 'Belvidere') are not, properly speaking, Poems at all, and ought to be forgotten as soon as recited." There is, however, one prize poem, or at least a passage in it, which lovers of poetry refuse to forget:

> It seems no work of man's creative hand,
> By labour wrought as wavering fancy plann'd,
> But from the rock as if by magic grown,
> Eternal, silent, beautiful, alone!
> Not virgin-white like that old Doric shrine
> Where erst Athena held her rites divine;
> Nor saintly-grey, like many a Minster fane,
> That crowns the hill, and consecrates the plain;
> But rosy-red as if the blush of dawn
> That first beheld them were not yet withdrawn.
> The hues of youth upon a brow of woe,
> Which man deemed old two thousand years ago,
> Match me such marvel save in Eastern clime,
> A rose-red city half as old as Time.

This passage from a Newdigate on "Petra" (1845) figures in anthologies; and if only for the sake of the last two lines, which have a touch of the magic of true poetry, it may entitle Dean Burgon to rank among the single-poem poets. But is a single good passage enough to give its writer a place among the poets? Byron, who was prolific, would not admit that even one good piece gave such title. Medwin seems to have forced him to allow that *Hyperion* was fine, and tried to press his advantage by suggesting that it was a proof of the poetical genius of Keats. "Hyperion!" replied Byron.

"Why, a man might as well pretend to be rich who had one diamond." On the other hand, I see that Mr. Drinkwater would admit a man to Parnassus in virtue even of a single line. "If," he says, "a poet never achieves anything more than what might be called a fairly good lyric line, we are foolish to give him a thought; if he achieves one perfect lyric line, thereby winning from us one moment of rapt attention, and does no more, in that moment of achievement he stands worthily with the masters."

A perfect lyric line is rarer than a passable set of verses, and in the latter sort there is much truth in Mill's saying. Archbishop Trench says of his Anthology, "I have gladly found room, as often as I fairly could, for poems written by those who, strictly speaking, were not poets; or who, if poets, have only rarely penned their inspiration, and, either wanting the accomplishment of verse, or not caring to use it, have preferred to embody thoughts which might have claimed a metrical garb in other than metrical forms. Poems from such authors," he adds, "must always have a special interest for us." That is true, but the interest is rather in suggesting questions about the strange denial and gift of poetic genius, than in revealing high poetic power in men who preferred to write in prose. The Archbishop cites, as instances of his poets who made refusal, pieces by Bacon and Jeremy Taylor, but I do not think that many

readers will be convinced thereby. Bacon's piece, if his it be (for the point is disputed), is not even an original.[1]

There is another famous lawyer who cultivated the Muse assiduously for a time, and his "Farewell" to poetry is to be found in anthologies. It is too long to be printed in full here, but the opening lines will give a sufficient idea of its quality:

> As, by some tyrant's stern command,
> A wretch forsakes his native land,
> In foreign climes condemned to roam,
> An endless exile from his home;
> Pensive he treads the destined way;
> And dreads to go, nor dares to stay;
> Till on some neighbouring mountain's brow
> He stops, and turns his eyes below;
> There, melting at the well-known view,
> Drops a last tear, and bids adieu:
> So I, thus doomed from thee to part,
> Gay Queen of fancy and of art,
> Reluctant move, with doubtful mind,
> Oft stop, and often look behind.

There are better lines in the piece than these, and the versification is smooth and pleasant, but there is nothing here to lead us to think that the destinies marred a poet in making a man of law. Blackstone did, however, carry something of the poet into his future work. For poetry treats of the universal, and what distinguishes the

[1] See below, pp. 302, 359.

*Commentaries* is their conception of English law as a complex yet harmonious whole. And this was the spirit in which he forsook the "gay queen of fancy" for "the venerable maid, the guardian of Britannia's law." His ambition was to

> Unfold with joy her sacred page,
> The united boast of many an age;
> Where mixed, yet uniform, appears
> The wisdom of a thousand years. . . .
> Observe how parts with parts unite
> In one harmonious rule of right;
> See countless wheels distinctly tend
> By various laws to one great end.

There have been famous men of letters who at times felt the desire to compose in verse, but I find no Tynnichus among them. Carlyle, true prose-poet though he was, had not the gift of song, and thought too lightly of it in others. To him Shelley merely "filled the earth with inarticulate wail, like the infinite, inarticulate grief and weeping of forsaken infants"; and he dismissed the whole poetry of Keats as consisting "in a weak-eyed maudlin sensibility." But Carlyle sometimes tried to sing, and Swinburne has gibbeted the efforts, coupling them, however, with those of Walt Whitman. "The ear which has once absorbed their dulcet-rhymes will never need to be reminded of the reason for their contemptuous abhorrence of a diversion so contemptible as the art of Coleridge and Shelley.

Out of eternity
This new day is born :
Into eternity
This day shall return.

Such were the flute-notes of Diogenes Devilsdung." But Carlyle could do better than this, and there is one piece by him which has figured in anthologies and entitles him to some place among single-poem poets—though only at second hand, for the lines were a version from Goethe. Carlyle recited them at the end of his Inaugural Address at Edinburgh :

The Future hides in it
Gladness and sorrow ;
We press still thorow,
Nought that abides in it
Daunting us,—onward.

And solemn before us,
Veiled, the dark Portal ;
Goal of all mortal :—
Stars silent rest o'er us,
Graves under us silent !

While earnest thou gazest,
Comes boding of terror,
Comes phantasm and error ;
Perplexes the bravest
With doubt and misgiving.

But heard are the Voices,
Heard are the Sages,
The Worlds and the Ages :
" Choose well ; your choice is
Brief, and yet endless.

Here eyes do regard you,
In Eternity's stillness ;
Here is all fulness,
Ye brave, to reward you :
Work, and despair not."

Not flute-like, perhaps, but not easily forgettable for what Carlyle called the piece—"a kind of road-melody or marching music of mankind." When Carlyle had done, the lads cheered and followed him. He escaped from the turmoil, and presently went home to learn that his wife was dead "and the light of his life as if gone out."

It was to Carlyle that many years before Lockhart had sent some lines which give the biographer of Scott a place, apart from his translations of Spanish ballads, among the occasional poets. The lines sent in a letter to Carlyle were the last three stanzas of a piece which is included in Mr. Locker-Lampson's *Lyra Elegantiarum* :

When youthful faith hath fled,
Of loving take thy leave ;
Be constant to the dead—
The dead cannot deceive.

Sweet modest flowers of spring,
How fleet your balmy day !
And man's brief year can bring
No secondary May.

No earthly burst again
Of gladness, not of gloom,
Fond hope and vision vain,
Ungrateful to the tomb.

But 'tis an old belief
That on some solemn shore,
Beyond the sphere of grief,
Dear friends shall meet once more.

Beyond the sphere of time,
And Sin and Fate's control,
Serene in endless prime
Of body and of soul.

That creed I fain would keep,
That hope I'll not forgo,
Eternal be the sleep,
Unless to waken so.

The lines were often on Carlyle's lips to the end of his own life, and, as Froude says, "will not be easily forgotten by any one who reads them."

It is not, however, among the wise and learned that the best single-poem poets are to be found, but rather in seemingly unlikely ground and sometimes in pieces that came from no one knows where. There is one class of single-poem poets from whom no deduction can be drawn: the fact that the poet wrote but one or two pieces may have been due, not to his having been touched but once by the celestial fire, but to the fact that he was cut off after a first proof of his calling. There is no more remarkable poem in this class than one written by Herbert Knowles at the age of eighteen, in the year before his death (1817). He was the son of humble parents at Leeds; and, being anxious to obtain a sizarship at Cambridge,

he wrote to Southey, enclosing his poem. Southey interested himself in the boy, gave him pecuniary help, and secured more from other sources. Knowles was elected a sizar at St. John's, but died a few weeks later. Southey printed the poem in the *Quarterly Review*, with some account of the author.[1] "The reader will remember," he said, "that these are the verses of a schoolboy, who had not long been taken from one of the lowest stations of life, and he will then judge what might have been expected from one who was capable of writing with such strength and originality upon the tritest of all subjects." Knowles called the poem "The Three Tabernacles," but in anthologies it is generally printed under the title "Stanzas in Richmond Churchyard." The piece is remarkable not only for its promise. "It would be difficult," said Dr. Garnett, "to overpraise this noble masterpiece of solemn and tender pathos, exquisite in diction and melody, and only marred by the anti-climax of the last stanza, fine in itself, but out of keeping with the general sentiment of the poem. If this had been omitted and the two preceding stanzas transposed, the impression would have been one of absolute perfection." The piece is too long to quote here, but I give the first and some of the concluding stanzas re-arranged as Dr. Garnett very judiciously suggested :

[1] In an article entitled "Cemeteries and Catacombs of Paris," *Quarterly Review*, April 1819, vol. 21, p. 396.

Methinks it is good to be here ;
If Thou wilt, let us build—but for whom ?
Nor Elias nor Moses appear,
But the shadows of eve that encompass the gloom,
The abode of the dead and the place of the tomb.
. . . . . .
Shall we build to Affection and Love ?
Ah, no ! they have withered and died,
Or fled with the spirit above ;
Friends, brothers, and sisters, are laid side by side,
Yet none have saluted, and none have replied.

Unto Death, to whom monarchs must bow ?
Ah, no ! for his empire is known,
And here there are trophies enow !
Beneath—the cold dead, and around—the dark stone,
Are the signs of a Sceptre that none may disown !

Unto Sorrow ?—The dead cannot grieve ;
Not a sob, not a sigh meets mine ear,
Which compassion itself could relieve !
Ah ! sweetly they slumber, nor hope, love, nor fear—
Peace, peace is the watchword, the only one here !

Mr. James Payn claimed to have discovered an unknown poet, two of whose pieces are printed in *The Heir of the Ages*. "The poems 'The Children' and 'On an Old Harpsichord' ascribed to Matthew Meyrick in this novel were written," says Mr. Payn in a prefatory note, "by a lad who died many years ago of consumption." They were sent to Mr. Payn for some periodical and he knew the writer only by correspondence. "Judging from his letters no less than his verses, I am well convinced that in him his country lost a genius."

The lines "On an Old Harpsichord," in Mr. Austin Dobson's vein, are highly creditable to a youth of nineteen. The piece called "The Children" is made more of in Mr. Payn's story, and its quality may be judged from these two verses :

To them when summer-time was bright,
Among the cowslip meadows,
Or round the winter fire at night,
While rose and fell the shadows—
Their faces all toward me bent,
Their eyes with pleasure glistening,
Their cheeks aglow with wonderment,
And all intently listening—

Would I discourse of gallant knights,
Their triumphs and distresses,
Of giant foes and tourney fights,
And beautiful princesses,
Of wide enchanted wanderings
In distant tropic prairies ;
Of fairies, and all fairy things
To these that are my fairies.

Very pretty, certainly ; but not, I think, the work of a Tynnichus.

"I enclose," wrote Rossetti, "a little poem, pitched on—where ?—in *Reynolds' Miscellany* ! and the authorship of which I want to find out. Do not you ?" The little poem is called "A Lover's Pastime," and is very pretty. It is too long, however, to quote here, but a few passages will give an idea of its merit :

Before the daybreak I arise
And search, to find if earth or air
Hold anywhere
The likeness of thy sweet, sweet eyes.

In nature's book,
Where semblances of thee I trace,
I mark the place,
With flowers that have a pleading look,
For pity, gentleness, and grace,
With lilies white ;
And roses that are burning bright
I take for blushes : then I catch
The sunbeams from the jealous air,
And with them match
The amber crowning of thy hair.
. . . . .
Before the daybreak I arise,
And search through earth, and sky, and air,
But find I never anywhere
The likeness of thy sweet, sweet eyes,
My modest lady, my exceeding fair.

The piece which thus attracted Rossetti and excited his curiosity may be read in his *Letters to William Allingham*, but even Dr. Birkbeck Hill, who edited the letters with searching thoroughness, was unable to discover the name of the presumably single-poem poet.

There are some lines in another piece of unknown origin which have haunted my memory ever since I first read them many years ago :

If I should die to-night,
My friends would look upon my quiet face
Before they laid it in its resting-place,

And deem that death had left it almost fair ;
And, laying snow-white flowers against my hair,
Would smooth it down with tearful tenderness,
And fold my hands with lingering caress :
Poor hands so empty and so cold to-night !

If I should die to-night,
My friends would call to mind, with loving thought,
Some kindly deed the icy hand had wrought ;
Some gentle words the frozen lips had said ;
Errands on which the willing feet had sped ;
The memory of my selfishness and pride,
My hasty words, would all be put aside,
And so I should be loved and mourned to-night.

If I should die to-night,
Even hearts estranged would turn once more to me,
Recalling other days remorsefully ;
The eyes that chid me with averted glance
Would look upon me as of yore perchance,
And soften in the old familiar way ;
For who could war with dumb unconscious clay ?
So I might rest forgiven of all to-night.

O, friends, I pray to-night,
Keep not your kisses for my dead, cold brow ;
The way is lonely, let me feel them now.
Think gently of me, I am travel-worn,
My faltering feet are pierced with many a thorn.
Forgive, oh hearts estranged, forgive, I plead.
When dreamless rest is mine, I shall not need
The tenderness for which I long to-night.

These verses have made a wide appeal to curiously different minds. Sir H. Rider Haggard, in *Jess*, made his heroine write them out before she set forth to kill Frank Muller. The author of

*Jess* had received them from a lady friend in South Africa, whose work he supposed them to be. They had, however, been already printed in a very different connexion, having appeared under the title "The Chamber of Peace" in an American anthology of religious verse called *My Comforter*, whilst my own copy of them was cut out of the English *Public Opinion* of July 22, 1876. A claim has been put in for Australia as the place of origin, as the verses were printed in a book called *Adelaide de la Thoreza* by a Dr. Cameron of Richmond (in Victoria). Professor James Stuart ascribed the verses to Theodore Parker;[1] but an equally definite claim has been made for Philadelphia. In the *Press* of that city they were said to be the work of a local resident, Mr. R. C. Vivian Myers, who, it was added, "has written much that is excellent, but nothing entitled to approach these famous verses, which are universally regarded as classic." For many years "this little gem" was a favourite piece, it seems, with a popular reciter. Mr. Myers was stated to be alive, but, so far as I am aware, he did not come forward to establish the claim. The piece is not a classical gem. Indeed, I can imagine that an unsympathetic reader might dismiss it as savouring of the novelette; but there are lines in it, and

[1] In a letter of 1883 to Mrs. Drew (*Some Hawarden Letters*, p. 130). The question was the subject of a prolonged correspondence in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of March 1887 and following months.

especially the last two, which seem to me to have the poignancy of true poetry.

If it be the work of the Philadelphian gentleman, he may be ranked among the single-poem poets; but internal evidence suggests that it was written by a woman. Here is another piece by a woman poet, and of a higher order of merit:

Shall mine eyes behold thy glory, O my country? Shall mine eyes behold thy glory?
Or shall the darkness close around them, ere the sun-blaze break at last upon thy story?

When the nations ope for thee their queenly circle, as a sweet new sister hail thee,
Shall these lips be sealed in callous death and silence, that have known but to bewail thee?

Shall the ear be deaf that only loved thy praises, when all men their tribute bring thee?
Shall the mouth be clay that sang thee in thy squalor, when all poets' mouths shall sing thee?

Ah! the harpings and the salvos and the shoutings of thy exiled sons returning!
I should hear, tho' dead and mouldered, and the grave-damps should not chill my bosom's burning.

Ah! the tramp of feet victorious! I should hear them 'mid the shamrocks and the mosses,
And my heart should toss within the shroud and quiver as a captive dreamer tosses.

I should turn and rend the cere-clothes round me, giant sinews I should borrow—
Crying, "O, my brothers, I have also loved her in her loneliness and sorrow.

"Let me join with you the jubilant procession; let me chant with you her story;
Then contented I shall go back to the shamrocks, now mine eyes have seen her glory!"

This is not the work of a single-poem poet, for Miss Fanny Parnell (sister of Charles Stewart) wrote many other pieces similarly inspired by a passionate devotion to the cause of "Ireland a Nation"; but this is the one piece from her pen in which the passion has been fused by a controlling art into perfect beauty.

A piece which haunts the memory of all who have once heard it is "The Canadian Boat Song," called by Lord Rosebery the most exquisite thing ever written about the Scottish exile. It may conjecturally be classed among the works of single-poem poets, though no man knows who the poet was. So far as has yet been traced, the verses first appeared in print in *Blackwood's Magazine* for September 1829. They were embedded in No. 46 of the "Noctes Ambrosianae." The usual group are supposed to be passing the bottle and discussing things in general, when they reach the subject of the depopulation of the Highlands. The Shepherd hears that the Duke of Hamilton's cottars are all leaving the Isle of Arran, and Christopher North continues the talk thus:

By the bye, I have a letter this morning from a friend of mine now in Upper Canada. He was rowed down the St. Lawrence lately, for several days on end, by a set

of strapping fellows, all born in that country, and yet hardly one of whom could speak a word of any tongue but the Gaelic. They sung heaps of our old Highland oar-songs, he says, and capitally well, in the true Hebridean fashion; and they had others of their own, Gaelic too, some of which my friend noted down, both words and music. He has sent me a translation of one of their ditties—shall I try how it will croon?

And then under the heading—"Canadian Boat Song (*from the Gaelic*)"—these stanzas with refrain are given:

Listen to me, as when ye heard our father
Sing long ago the song of other shores—
Listen to me, and then in chorus gather
All your deep voices as ye pull your oars:
*Fair these broad meads—these hoary woods are grand;*
*But we are exiles from our fathers' land.*

From the lone shieling of the misty island
Mountains divide us, and the waste of seas—
Yet still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland,
And we in dreams behold the Hebrides:
*Fair these broad meaas, etc.*

We ne'er shall tread the fancy-haunted valley,
Where 'tween the dark hills creeps the small clear stream,
In arms around the patriarch banner rally,
Nor see the moon on royal tombstones gleam:
*Fair these broad meads, etc.*

When the bold kindred, in the time long-vanish'd,
Conquer'd the soil and fortified the keep,—
No seer foretold the children would be banish'd,
That a degenerate Lord might boast his sheep:
*Fair these broad meads, etc.*

Come foreign rage—let Discord burst in slaughter!
O then for clansmen true, and stern claymore—
The hearts that would have given their blood like water,
Beat heavily beyond the Atlantic roar:

*Fair these broad meads—these hoary woods are grand;*
*But we are exiles from our fathers' land.*

The poem in one form or another, or at any rate the second stanza, has travelled all over the English-speaking world, and many conjectures have been made about its authorship. Some said that it must have been written by "Christopher North" himself, until it was ascertained that the article in *Blackwood* was written not by Wilson but by Lockhart, who accordingly has been named as another putative author of the piece. A third claim has been put in on behalf of John Galt, who was the author of an article in the same number of *Blackwood* about Canada. Then some one alleged that a MS. copy of the poem was found among the Earl of Eglinton's papers after his death in 1819, and he was suggested as the author—obviously on insufficient evidence, for a man may have a copy of verses without being their author. The question has never, I believe, been cleared up, and the text of the poem has been much corrupted by various re-publishers or quoters of it. Stevenson gave an incorrect version in *The Silverado Squatters*. Mr. Chamberlain, speaking at Inverness in his Radical days on the wrongs of the crofters, gave a very incorrect version of

the second stanza. "The Almighty Himself has implanted," he said, "in the human breast that passionate love of country which rivets with irresistible attraction the Esquimaux to his eternal snows, the Arab to his sandy desert, the Highlander to his rugged mountains. This feeling has been expressed with grace and simplicity by one of your own poets when he says:

> From the dim shieling on the misty island
> Mountains divide us and a world of seas;
> But still our hearts are true—our hearts are Highland;
> And in our dreams we see the Hebrides.
> Tall are these mountains, and these woods are grand:
> But we are exiles from our fathers' land."

Lord Rosebery, speaking in 1904, quoted the verse more nearly to the original in *Blackwood*, but still not quite textually; and even Sir Henry Lucy, in copying the piece from the magazine, made one or two slight mistakes—though, to be sure, his variations may seem to some readers to be improvements. But after all, is it quite certain that the version in *Blackwood* of 1829 was the original? The piece was given with different readings in *Tait's Magazine* for June 1849, and some critics have suggested that each version may be derived from an untraced original.[1]

[1] There was a pleasant paper on the poem, by Sir Henry Lucy, in the *Cornhill* for December 1909, but the fullest and most careful study of the subject with which I am acquainted was contributed by Mr. G. M. Fraser, of the Public Library, Aberdeen, to *The Times Literary Supplement* of December 23, 1904.

No poem in the English language is better known than the immortal piece on "The Burial of Sir John Moore at Corunna," and though its author wrote other verses, it is so incomparably better than they that Charles Wolfe, an Irish parson, may perhaps be called the British Tynnichus. Admirable though the piece was, the author was so obscure that only when it had been associated with a famous name did it obtain the fame that was its due. The history of the poem is of curious interest. It was written at Trinity College, Dublin, in 1816. Wolfe and a College friend were about to go out for a walk on a fine evening in summer, when the friend read aloud an account of Sir John Moore's burial. Wolfe "kindled into high enthusiasm as he listened; and during the time of our walk into the country scarce spoke a word." On returning to the friend's rooms, while coffee was being prepared, Wolfe recited two verses—the first and the last of the poem. Other friends were now present, and all admired the verses. Encouraged by their appreciation, Wolfe on returning to his own rooms must have finished the piece. Next morning at breakfast he gave his friends the whole poem. He had no intention of publishing it, but one of his friends who had taken a copy sent it to the *Newry Telegraph*, in which newspaper it appeared on April 19, 1817. It was copied into *Blackwood* two months later, and Wolfe and his

friends had the amusement of seeing it printed in paper after paper, ascribed to various writers of acknowledged celebrity.[1] Presently its newspaper vogue ceased, and the piece was like to share the usual fate of "magazine poetry" and pass into oblivion.

The scene now shifts from Dublin to Italy. At Pisa in January 1822 Medwin and other friends were dining with Byron and Shelley, and a question arose as to which was the most perfect ode that had been produced in the lyrical poetry of the day. Shelley contended for Coleridge's on "France," beginning:

> Ye Clouds! that far above me float and pause.

Others named some of Moore's Irish Melodies and Campbell's *Hohenlinden*. "Had Lord Byron not been present," says Medwin, "his own Invocation in Manfred, or Ode to Napoleon, or on Prometheus, might have been cited. 'Like Gray,' said he, 'Campbell smells too much of the oil: he is never satisfied with what he does; his finest things have been spoiled by over-polish—the sharpness of the outline is worn off. Like paintings, poems may be too highly finished. The great art is effect, no matter how produced. I will show you an ode you have never seen, that I consider little inferior to the best which the

[1] See *College Recollections* (Dublin, 1825) and *Remains of the late Rev. Charles Wolfe, with a Memoir by the Rev. J. A. Russell* (Dublin, 1825).

present prolific age has brought forth.' With this he left the table, almost before the cloth was removed, and returned with a magazine, from which he read the following lines on Sir John Moore's burial, which perhaps require no apology for finding a place here." The copy, as printed by Medwin, shows a few variations from the usual text, which the curious in such matters will find not uninteresting. "The feeling," continues Medwin, "with which he recited these admirable stanzas, I shall never forget. After he had come to an end, he repeated the third, and said it was perfect, particularly the lines :

> But he lay like a warrior taking his rest,
> With his martial cloak around him.

'I should have taken the whole,' said Shelley, 'for a rough sketch of Campbell's.' 'No,' replied Lord Byron, 'Campbell would have claimed it, if it had been his.' I afterwards had reason," says Medwin, "to think that the ode was Lord Byron's ; that he was piqued at none of his own being mentioned ; and, after he had praised the verses so highly, could not own them. No other reason can be assigned for his not acknowledging himself the author, particularly as he was a great admirer of General Moore." Medwin published his *Conversations of Lord Byron* in 1824, and the vogue which the book obtained drew wide attention to the elegy. It was clearly proved that Wolfe was

the author, and in a later edition Medwin admitted that his conjectural ascription of the verses to Byron was wrong; but literary fictions die hard, and for many years the piece was claimed, as Mr. Henley said, "by liar after liar" in succession. Father Prout wickedly added to the confusion by publishing a clever French translation, which he pretended to regard as the original of Wolfe's piece. The piece itself has been reprinted more often perhaps than any poem of its century, and to Wolfe belongs the rare distinction of having written a poem which is at once one of the most popular and one of the most perfect in the language.[1] It is perfect, says one of the commentators, "because it is perfectly adequate to its subject, and breathes the very spirit of the occasion. One would think it was trench poetry." The same writer contrasts it with Campbell's *Battle of the Baltic* and *Hohenlinden*, "in which a poet embroiders upon a theme he has got up from the newspapers." There is force in this criticism, but if, as is likely enough, Campbell found his subject in books or journals, so also did Wolfe. Such difference as there may be between Campbell's and Wolfe's work was due

[1] Tennyson, however, "wished the last line but two"—From the field of fame fresh and gory—"could be altered." Another critic objects to the second line in the penultimate stanza—When the clock struck the hour for retiring—as the one weak line in the poem, and tells us that an autograph copy of the poem sent by Wolfe to a friend has *note* for *hour*, which is certainly an improvement.

to treatment, not to the source of the suggestion. So true is it, as Byron said, that the great art is in effect, no matter how produced. Wolfe's poem is known to most people by heart, and is given in every anthology. Here is the raw material out of which it was made. The book from which Wolfe's friend read was the *Edinburgh Annual Register* for 1808 :

> Sir John Moore had often said that, if he was killed in battle, he wished to be buried where he fell. The body was removed at midnight to the citadel of Corunna. A grave was dug for him on the rampart there, by a party of the 9th Regiment, the Aides-de-camp attending by turns. No coffin could be procured ; and the Officers of his Staff wrapped the body, dressed as it was, in a military cloak and blankets. The interment was hastened ; for, about eight in the morning, some firing was heard, and the Officers feared that if a serious attack were made, they should be ordered away, and not suffered to pay him their last duty. The Officers of his family bore him to the grave ; the funeral service was read by the Chaplain ; and the corpse was covered with earth.

This admirable account is believed to have been written by Southey, and it is interesting to note how much of Wolfe's poetry is drawn out by sympathetic imagination from the lucid prose.

Was Wolfe's beautiful piece a freak of intellect, as some have called it—an act of inspiration, as Plato would have said — or was it the result of a poetic temperament which met in a happy moment with a subject that suited it, and might, if

fate had been propitious, have produced other fruit no less excellent? We cannot tell, for a few years after the composition of the piece by which he will for ever be remembered, Wolfe fell into a decline, and died in 1823 at the age of thirty-two. But Plato's theory of inspiration derives support from another famous piece. One of the best, and of the best-known, ballads in the language is the "Lament for Flodden," with the refrain, "The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away." Jane Elliot, a girl of the Minto family, was driving home one evening in the family coach with her brother Gilbert, and they talked of Flodden. Gilbert, it is said, wagered "a pair of gloves or a set of ribbons" against his sister's chances as a writer of a successful ballad on the subject. After this there was silence, and by the time the journey was ended the rough draft of the song was ready. It was presently published anonymously, and immediately won the popularity which it has retained to this day. It was supposed for some time to be a genuine antique, but the authorship was discovered, and Scott included it in his *Border Minstrelsy* as "by a lady of family in Roxburghshire." So far as is known, "The Flowers of the Forest" is the only poem that Jane Elliot wrote. She lived to be a septuagenarian.

Another modern ballad, "The Braes of Yarrow," may here be mentioned. It is not the single poem of its author, for Hamilton of

Bangour wrote others, but the immense superiority of this piece over every other in his *Poems* is hard to account for except on Plato's theory. It is, says Trench, "a tragic story tragically told, the situation boldly conceived, and the treatment marked by strength and passion throughout. Nothing else in the volume contains a trace of passion or of power, or is of the slightest value whatever." For this poem alone, says his biographer in the Dictionary, Hamilton will not be forgotten. It was greatly admired by Scott, as is shown by a passage in his *Border Minstrelsy*, and Wordsworth prefixed this note to his own "Yarrow Unvisited":

> See the various Poems the scene of which is laid upon the banks of the Yarrow; in particular, the exquisite Ballad of Hamilton, beginning
>
> Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny Bride,
> Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome Marrow.

Perhaps there is a Muse of the Yarrow who touches the lips of those who write about that stream.

Which is the finest sonnet in the English language? I am not going to raise this tempting question here further than to recall Coleridge's saying that Blanco White's on "Night and Death" was "the finest and most grandly conceived sonnet in our language," and Leigh Hunt's writing of the same piece that in point of thought it "stands supreme, perhaps, above all in any

language; nor can we ponder it too deeply, or with too hopeful a reverence." Coleridge, it is true, modified his praise by adding, "at least it is only in Milton and in Wordsworth that I remember any rival"; and this was a large qualification, for most people would, I suppose, agree that if the finest sonnet is not to be found in Shakespeare, then it is to Milton and Wordsworth that we must go to look for it. My present purpose, however, is to note the remarkable fact that the sonnet which Coleridge thus extolled should have been written by a man to whom English was an acquired language,[1] and that it was the single work of genius produced by a voluminous author. Blanco White lived a full and varied life, and his theological speculations and spiritual wanderings made some impress on the thought of his time. But it is by his single sonnet that he "will continue to be known," says Leslie Stephen, "when his other works, in spite of the real interest of his views, have been forgotten." Here is the famous piece:

Mysterious Night! when our first parent knew
Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,
Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
This glorious canopy of light and blue?

[1] He had, however, early acquired a mastery of serviceable English emphasis. It is related that when he was escaping from Spain he claimed to be a British subject; and that on his claim being disputed by an official, he replied, "Damn your eyes!" This was considered to settle the case, and he was allowed to proceed.

Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,
Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,
Hesperus with the host of heaven came,
And lo! Creation widened in man's view.

Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed
Within thy beams, O Sun! or who could find,
Whilst flow'r and leaf and insect stood revealed,
That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind?
Why do we then shun Death with anxious strife?
If Light can thus deceive, wherefore not Life?[1]

Who, then, shall we say was right—Plato or Mill? Do the single-poem poets owe their success to act of God, or are their productions such as by happy fortune may come to any man who fulfils Mr. Mill's conditions? Mr. William Sharp, in his charming collection of *Sonnets of the Century*, asks the question but does not resolve it. "The composition of this noble sonnet," he says of Blanco White, "must either have been a magnificent fluke or else the outcome of a not very powerful poetic impulse, concentrated in one great effort and therein exhausting itself for ever." Several of the instances which I have given may be explained by the latter formula. But the impulse to poetic expression, the poetic feeling, does not always, however powerful the

[1] I have printed the sonnet with an alteration in the accepted text which Mr. Sharp made—the alteration of *flow'r* for *fly* in the eleventh line. "It is an alteration," says Mr. Sharp, "which every commentator has yearned to make—or ought to have so yearned. Even if White did not write *flow'r*, we may at least credit him with the intention of doing so" (*Sonnets of the Century*, 1886, p. 322).

exciting cause may have been, result in a thing of beauty. For instance, take some verses by Thomas James, the navigator, who was sent out by Bristol merchants in 1631 for the discovery of the North-West Passage. The spirited account of his Arctic voyage has been thought by some, though on insufficient grounds, to have been the original of Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Frozen up in the ice, James and his men passed a winter of frightful sufferings which were endured with much simple heroism, but many of the company succumbed to the hardships of that time. "And now," says James in describing the day of deliverance, "the sun was set, and the boat came ashore for us, whereupon after evening prayer we assembled and went up to take a last view of our dead; where, leaning upon my arm on one of their tombs, I uttered these lines; which, though perhaps they may procure laughter in the wiser sort, they yet moved my young and tender-hearted companions at that time to some compassion." Here are some of the lines which, whatever else may be thought of them, will assuredly not provoke laughter in any generous reader:

I were unkind unless that I did shed,
Before I part, some tears upon our dead. . . .
Their better parts (good souls) I know were given
With an intent they should return to heaven. . . .
And as a valiant soldier rather dies,
Than yield his courage to his enemies . . .

So have they spent themselves ; and here they lie,
A famous mark of our discovery.
We that survive perchance may end our days
In some employment meriting no praise,
And in a dunghill rot, when no man names
The memory of us, but to our shames.
They have outlived this fear, and their brave ends
Will ever be an honour to their friends. . . .

The whole of James's piece will be found in Trench's *Household Book of English Poetry*. "To me," says the Archbishop, "the lines seem to have the pathos, better than any other, of truth." But, Keats notwithstanding, though beauty may be truth, truth is not always beauty. The idea in the concluding lines of the extract from James's piece is poetic, but the form in which it is expressed is faulty, and the last line verges on bathos. It needed the genius of Shelley to give perfect expression to the same idea :

He has outsoared the shadow of our night . . .
He is secure, and now can never mourn
A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain.

It may be said that James, the navigator, had not fulfilled Mill's conditions. He had genuine feelings, but he had not acquired "(as all persons may) the faculty of delineating them correctly." And no doubt he had not cultivated the art, but the delineation was correct enough : it was the poetic form that was imperfect. There have been many men of literary gifts who have cultivated the art of poetic expression most diligently and

yet have missed the poet's crown. Ruskin is a curious case in point, for he had many seemingly poetic gifts, but never attained to anything more than middling verse, and

> gods, and men, and booksellers agree
> To place their ban on middling poetry.

But this is a case which I have discussed at some length elsewhere.[1] There was never a poet who laboured longer or with greater devotion to perfect his powers of expression than Milton, but his verse, we are told, was not at the command of his will. Sometimes "the lines flowed without premeditation with a certain impetus and oestro"; but at other times he would lie awake the whole night long, trying, but unable to make a single line.

*Poeta nascitur, non fit*: the poet is born not made. So says the proverb. Nay, not so, it has been answered: the poet is born *and* made. And that was the answer given long ago by Horace to

> a question some men start,
> If good verse comes from nature or from art.
> For me, I cannot see how native wit
> Can e'er dispense with art, or art with it.
> Set them to pull together, they're agreed,
> And each supplies what each is found to need.

"Wit, ingenuity, and learning in verse," wrote Milton's nephew, "even elegancy itself, though that comes nearest, are one thing; true native

[1] *Life of Ruskin*, vol. i. ch. iv.

poetry is another, in which there is a certain air and spirit, which, perhaps the most learned and judicious in other arts do not perfectly apprehend ; much less is it attainable by any art or study." The last words of this saying, in which Edward Phillips may have written what he had learned from Milton, require some little qualification. True native poetry cannot, it is true, be attained by study, but it must be written under the laws of art and it is perfected by thought. "Great wits are sure to madness near allied," and in regard to poetry Plato agreed with Dryden ; but it is Dryden who relates of Nathaniel Lee that when some one said to him, "It is an easy thing to write like a madman," he replied, "No, it is very difficult to write like a madman, but it is a very easy matter to write like a fool." This, says Lowell, was "perhaps the most compendious lecture on poetry ever delivered." But the last word on this subject was said by Coleridge in the fifteenth chapter of his *Biographia Literaria*. In that chapter Coleridge distinguishes, with illustrations from "our myriad-minded Shakespeare," between the specific elements of true poetic power and "that general talent which may be determined to poetic composition by accidental motives, by an act of will, rather than by the inspiration of a genial and productive nature." And then he goes on to show, again by reference to essential elements in true

poetry, that Shakespeare was yet "no mere child of nature, no automaton of genius, no passive vehicle of inspiration possessed by the spirit, not possessing it. He studied patiently, meditated deeply, understood minutely, till knowledge, become habitual and intuitive, wedded itself to his habitual feelings, and at length gave birth to that stupendous power, by which he stands alone, with no equal or second in his own class; to that power which seated him on one of the two glory-smitten summits of the poetic mountain, with Milton as his compeer, not rival. . . . All things and modes of action shape themselves anew in the being of Milton; while Shakespeare becomes all things, yet for ever remaining himself."

# VIII

# THE CHARM OF THE GREEK ANTHOLOGY

*Why should little things be blamed?*
*Little things for grace are famed.*

T. P. Rogers (*Anth. Pal.* ix. 784).

*Dew from the mountains of morn distilled on the shores of the sunset;*
*Gleams of the glory of Greece, gilding our ultimate clime.*

Alfred Perceval Graves (*Spectator*, March 1, 1919).

Twenty centuries have passed since the first collection was made of the little flowers of Greek poetry, and with many later accessions the book still lays its spell over the educated world. It was in the latter part of the first century B.C. that a Greek poet, born at Gadara but settled in the island of Cos, put together the collection of minor poetry which is the prototype of all anthologies, florilegia, golden treasuries, and garlands from his day to ours. Of the "Garland of Meleager," as he compiled it, only his prefatory poem survives, but in the tenth century of our era a scholar named Cephalas re-arranged Meleager's book, adding many pieces from later collections of the

kind. In the early part of the fourteenth century, Maximus Planudes, theologian, grammarian, and rhetorician, brought out a new Anthology founded on that of Cephalas, but with additions and omissions. This Planudean Anthology, first printed in 1494, for a long time held the field. In 1606–7 Claude de Saumaise, better known as Milton's antagonist Salmasius, discovered in the library of the Counts Palatine at Heidelberg a manuscript of the Anthology of Cephalas: this is the Palatine Anthology. But Salmasius died before he had completed his edition of the Palatine MS.; the MS. itself passed through various vicissitudes, and it was not till the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century that a complete edition of the Anthology, collated from those of Cephalas and Planudes, was available. The collection has been edited and selected by scholars of many countries in successive centuries, and to translate pieces from it has been a favourite pastime with many sorts and conditions of men.

The charm has not, it is true, always been felt. The Greek Anthology was one of the things which Lord Chesterfield advised his son to avoid: "I hope you will keep company with Horace and Cicero among the Romans, and Homer and Xenophon among the Greeks, and that you have got out of the worst company in the world—the Greek epigrams. Martial has wit, and is worth

looking into sometimes; but I recommend the Greek epigrams to your supreme contempt." And in France the expression *à la Grecque*, applied to a thin and indifferent soup, is said to have been derived from the supposed insipidity of Greek "epigrams." In our own time the Anthology has been dismissed by a famous scholar, not so much as too thin, but rather as too highly spiced. "No study seems to me," we read, "more wearisome and profitless than the Anthology. . . . There is such obvious artificiality, such posing, such false joy and grief, such sacrifice of substance to form, that the soul of the reader who thirsts after the real companionship of other souls is like the despairing Dido in her dreams:

> semper longam incomitata videtur
> ire viam et Tyrios deserta quaerere terra."[1]

Sir John Mahaffy, who did not often hanker after the accepted views, claimed in this case that he was "taking sides with the great bulk of classical readers by whom this collection of poems has been treated with neglect." On the side of the minority (if such it be), I call three modern witnesses. "The Anthology," wrote Mr. Symonds, "may from some points of view be regarded as

[1] *Aeneid*, iv. 467, thus rendered by Conington:

> And still companionless she seems
> To tread the wilderness of dreams,
> And vainly still her Tyrians seek
> Through desert regions, ah, how bleak!

the most valuable relic of antique literature which we possess." "There is no book in my library," says Mr. Frederic Harrison, "which I take down and taste with the gusto of an epicure more often than Mackail's Greek Anthology." "Mr. Gladstone 82 to-day," wrote Lord Morley on December 29, 1891; "I gave him Mackail's Greek Epigrams, and if it affords him half as much pleasure as it has given me, he will be very grateful." The difference of opinion disclosed in such judgements has led a scholar to propound the question, Whether there is any standard of literary taste?[1] But in this case of the Greek Anthology there is room for both opinions. The collection is of 14,000 pieces, and they are of all sorts—good, bad, and indifferent. The terms may be taken in a moral as well as in a literary sense. There is much in the collection which is tiresome, much also which is repulsive, and even in the better sort there is a certain monotony. The Anthology is one of those books which call for dipping and skipping, or which may best be read in Selections. Let us then be reconciled. Let us concede to Sir John Mahaffy that the bulk of classical readers have treated the bulk of the Anthology with neglect. But the fact that Mr. Mackail's "Select Epigrams" has reached a third edition, and the long list of translations which is given on another page must be taken as proof that Mr. Symonds,

[1] See Mr. Hugh Platt's *A Last Ramble in the Classics*.

Mr. Harrison, and Lord Morley are not alone in their taste, and that the charm of the best things in the Anthology, which has been felt by poets and scholars in the past, is still potent in these latter days.

One source of charm in reading the Anthology is to find—as did he who came fresh to *Hamlet*—"how full it is of quotations." When Shakespeare himself wrote that "all the world's a stage," he was elaborating the comparison made by Palladas of Alexandria in an epigram (x. 72) thus rendered by Robert Bland :

> This life a theatre we well may call,
> Where every actor must perform with art,
> Or laugh it through, and make a farce of all,
> Or learn to bear with grace his tragic part.[1]

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Bottom pronounces that "Reason and love keep little company now-a-days"; it was the same in the days of Meleager, "And what is Reason to Love?" (xii. 117). In Sonnet cxlvi. it is said, "And Death once dead, there's no more dying then." Palladas had ended a sombre epigram with a like thought : "Weep not," he says, "for him who departs from life, for after death there is no other suffering" (x. 59). And when Romeo speaks of himself as "Fortune's fool," he was anticipated by

[1] The most curious parallel, however, is this passage ascribed to Democritus : *ὁ κόσμος σκηνή, ὁ βίος πάραδος· ἦλθες, εἶδες, ἀπῆλθες.*

the Greek epigram of Palladas (x. 80), which Goldwin Smith thus turned into English :

> This wretched life of ours is Fortune's ball ;
> 'Twixt wealth and poverty she bandies all ;
> These, cast to earth, up to the skies rebound ;
> These, tossed to heaven, come tumbling to the ground.

As we read the Anthology, stanzas from Fitz-Gerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* are often recalled ; as that in which we are said to be

> But helpless Pieces of the Game He plays
> Upon this Chequer-board of Nights and Days ;
> Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays,
> And one by one back in the Closet lays.

In one of the epigrams by Zonas the orator, the wine-cup is hailed as being made of the earth from which man came and to which he will return (xi. 43). Even so in Omar :

> Then to the lip of this poor earthen Urn
> I lean'd, the Secret of my Life to learn :
> And Lip to Lip it murmur'd—"While you live,
> Drink !—for, once dead, you never shall return."

Every one knows the poem attributed to Bacon on the vanity of life, beginning with "The world's a bubble," and ending with the lines :

> What then remains but that we still should cry
> For being born, or, being born, to die ?

Mr. Palgrave, who included the piece in the earlier editions of his *Golden Treasury*, notes it as "a fine

example of a peculiar class of poetry—that written by thoughtful men who practised this art but little." Bacon may indeed have learnt in suffering what he put into verse, but Mr. Palgrave might have added that the same lesson had been learnt centuries before, and that Bacon was in fact paraphrasing, and in places almost literally translating, an epigram by Poseidippus (ix. 359).[1] Mr. Palgrave cites Sir Henry Wotton as another example of the class of poets above described; but when in his well-known piece to Elizabeth of Bohemia he asks "You meaner beauties of the night, What are you when the moon shall rise?" Wotton had been anticipated by Marcus Argentarius, who, in a neatly turned epigram (v. 110), says that Euphrante is the girl for him—"one against ten; yes, for the one light of the moon outshines the innumerable stars." Still better known is Ben Jonson's song "To Celia"; but it was Agathias in the Anthology (v. 261) who first asked his lady-love to leave a kiss but in the cup.[2] The second stanza of the same song is also reminiscent of the Anthology:

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honouring thee
As giving it a hope that there
It could not wither'd be;

[1] The epigram was translated also by Sir John Beaumont, together with the answer to it by another poet of the Anthology, Metrodorus (ix. 360).

[2] The song "To Celia" is, however, translated from Philostratus.

But thou thereon didst only breathe
And sent'st it back to me ;
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,
Not of itself but thee.

The same conceit occurs in an anonymous epigram (v. 91) thus rendered by Dr. Garnett :

I send thee myrrh, not that thou mayest thus be
By it perfumed, but it perfumed by thee.

The song "To Celia" is followed in the *Golden Treasury* by Campion's "Cherry-Ripe" :

There is a garden in her face
Where roses and white lilies blow.
There cherries grow that none may buy,
Till Cherry-Ripe themselves do cry.

The same idea was put by Dionysius of Cyzicus eighteen centuries before in an epigram of two lines (v. 81) which has been prettily expanded by Mr. Pott (in his charming *Greek Love Songs and Epigrams*) in a piece with this theme :

Which roses do you offer me,
Those on your cheeks, or those beside you ?

When Waller wrote "Go, Lovely Rose," and bade the flower, when its message was delivered, to die, "that she The common fate of all things rare May read in thee," he was probably thinking, as Archbishop Trench pointed out, of the graceful epigram of Rufinus (v. 74) in

which he sends a garland to Rhodocleia with a like intent :

I send a wreath of comely flowers to thee
That mine own fingers did together twine :
Lily and rosebud and anemone,
Fresh daffodils and dewy eglantine.
Crown thee :—but end thy proud disdain of me :
Flowers have their time to fade, and thou hast thine.
(A. J. BUTLER.)

When Burns wrote "O that my love were yon red rose," he was repeating the wish of the unknown poet in the Anthology that he were a pink rose that so he might rest upon the snowy breast of his love (v. 84). "I would be the jewel," wrote Tennyson, "That trembles in her ear. . . . And I would be the girdle About her dainty dainty waist. . . . And I would be the necklace," and so forth. Two pieces in the Anthology (v. 83, 84) have been compared with this song in *The Miller's Daughter*; but it is nearer, as Professor Collins pointed out,[1] to an ode of Ronsard, of which the original was a well-known piece of the Pseudo-Anacreon.[2] When Rossetti, in one of his sonnets, "drank all her soul," he was inverting the wish of Meleager (v. 171) that his Zenophile would touch his lips and drink up the very soul of him. So too Marlowe has "Her lips suck forth my soul": the passage, which is quoted elsewhere (p. 365),

[1] *Illustrations of Tennyson*, p. 39.
[2] No. 17 in Bullen's *Anacreon*.

has some resemblance to another epigram in the Anthology. When Madge Wildfire in *The Heart of Midlothian* sings "Six braw gentlemen Kirkward shall carry ye," Scott was echoing a reflection made by Nicarchus (v. 39) that it mattered not in what infirmity of body he went to Hades, "for many will carry me." Dr. Johnson said of a gentleman who, after an unhappy marriage, married again immediately after his wife's death, that it was "the triumph of hope over experience." He had in some sort been anticipated by an unknown author in the Anthology (ix. 133) who says, as rendered by Dr. Grundy :

He that has married once and marries yet again
Is like a shipwrecked man who once more tempts the main.

It is one of the charms of Mr. Mackail's "Select Epigrams" that he supplies so many parallel passages from the poetry of other countries and ages, and we may all add to them from our own recollection. Mr. Mackail with the nicety of a finished scholar often carries his parallels from thoughts and phrases to single words. For instance, Camillo in *The Winter's Tale* speaks of "unpath'd waters, undream'd shores." Shakespeare was anticipated by Crinagoras of Mitylene, who recorded the death of a youth buried far away from his home, "a stranger on unmapped shores" (vii. 376).

General George P. Morris, the author of the

much-quoted "Woodman, spare that tree," and Campbell, in his "Beech-Tree's Petition," were both in some sort anticipated by Zonas, in the Anthology (ix. 312), who made the oak-tree plead for mercy, thus in Merivale's version :

Spare the parent of acorns, good wood-cutter, spare. . . .
Far hence be your axe, for our grandams have sung
How the oaks are the mothers from whom we all sprang.

In one of the beautiful stanzas which the fastidious taste of Gray caused him to discard on a final revision of the *Elegy*, there is a reminiscence of a piece in the Anthology :

There scattered oft, the earliest of the year,
By hands unseen, are showers of violets found ;
The red-breast loves to build, and warble there,
And little footsteps lightly print the ground.

Rhianus in his epitaph on Timon (vii. 315) had written of a grave so covered by thorn or bramble "that not even a bird in spring may rest its light foot on me."[1]

In Wordsworth also there are echoes of the Anthology to be found. The "fond and wayward thought" that he makes slide into a lover's head is compared by Mr. Mackail to Meleager's fear that his Heliodora had been snatched away (xii. 147). And the mountain echo answering to the cuckoo, sound for sound, is itself an echo of a Greek

[1] I take this parallel passage from Platt's *Last Ramble in the Classics*, p. 128.

epigram (*App. Plan.* 153). Perhaps the echoes were accidental, but Wordsworth's admiration of one at least of the poets of the Anthology is immortalised in the well-known lines which end with

> One precious tender-hearted scroll
> Of pure Simonides;

and in the 4th Book of *The Excursion*, where the growth of natural religion is traced, there is a passage which recalls many a dedicatory inscription in the Anthology:

> The lively Grecian, in a land of hills,
> Rivers, and fertile plains, and sounding shores,
> Under a cope of sky more variable,
> Could find commodious place for every god. . . .
> "Take, running river, take these locks of mine"—
> Thus would the votary say—"this severed hair,
> My vow fulfilling, do I here present,
> Thankful for my beloved child's return."

Some of the echoes of the Anthology which occur in modern poetry are conscious and deliberate even when not avowed. When Browning in *Aristophanes' Apology* makes Balaustion say:

> Grant, in good sooth, our great dead, all the same
> Retain their sense, as certain wise men say,
> I'd hang myself to see Euripides,

he was translating literally enough the touching tribute paid by the comic poet Philemon (ix. 450). The lines on Drayton's monument in Westminster Abbey, traditionally ascribed to Ben Jonson, invoke

"the pious marble" to protect his memory and predict that when its

> Ruin shall disclaim
> To be the treasurer of his fame,
> His name, that cannot faile, shall be
> An everlasting monument to thee.

This is clearly a recollection of another piece in the Anthology—in praise of Euripides—an inscription for his cenotaph near Athens (vii. 46), thus rendered by Lord Neaves:

> This tombstone is no monument of thee,
> But thou of it, Euripides, shall be :
> Thy glory clothes it, and men come to see.

So again when Swift wrote

> Stella's wit is so charming, so sweet her fair face,
> She shines a new Venus, a Muse, and a Grace,

he was paraphrasing the compliment which an unknown epigrammatist had paid to Dercylis (v. 95). In the *Poems* of Samuel Rogers there are some pretty lines "From a Greek Epigram" :

> While on the cliff with calm delight she kneels,
> And the blue vales a thousand joys recall,
> See, to the last, last verge her infant steals !
> O fly—yet stir not, speak not, lest it fall.
> Far better taught, she lays her bosom bare,
> And the fond boy springs back to nestle there.

This is an imitation of an epigram in four lines by Parmenio, the Macedonian (ix. 114). Many of Moore's lyrics are not so much translations as

pieces in deliberate imitation of the Anthology. So again, to take an instance in a different sort, every one knows Porson's epigram :

> The Germans at Greek
> Are sadly to seek,
> Not five in five-score,
> But ninety-five more ;
> All—save only Hermann ;
> And Hermann's a German.

This was a parody of an epigram by Demodocus on the Cilicians (xi. 236), and there is another to like purport on the Lerians.[1] As Lord Neaves remarked, poor Hermann had to pay the penalty for his name and nationality rhyming so easily together.

How did Shakespeare, who had "small Latin and less Greek," come to know the Greek Anthology ? Probably here and there by Latin, Italian, or French versions of stray epigrams. At any rate there is one epigram (ix. 627) which he himself almost translated. It is by a Byzantine lawyer, Marianus, who amused himself by turning Theocritus into iambics as well as by turning occasional verses of his own. The piece in question was an inscription for a hot spring known as " The Fountain of Love," and is thus rendered by Mr. Pott :

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[1] By Phocylides (Bergk, *Anthologia Lyrica*, Phoc. 16), thus rendered by a clever schoolboy :

> Of the Lerians not a few,
> But *all* are bad, save only you,
> And, Procles, you're a Lerian too !

'Twas here, beneath the plane-tree's shade
That weary Love one day was laid,
And, overcome with gentle sleep,
He gave the nymphs his torch to keep.
So then they said to one another,
"Why dally we the flame to smother?
'Twere well if mortals' fierce desire
Could be extinguished with the fire."
But when they tried the torch to cool,
It set afire the very pool;
And they that strove the flame to quell
Are serving-maids at Eros' well.

This version is reasonably literal as well as pretty, and if the English reader will now turn to the last two of Shakespeare's sonnets, he will see how closely their idea follows the Greek. The sonnets are apparently alternative versions. I give the second of them:

The little Love-god, lying once asleep,
Laid by his side his heart-inflaming brand,
Whilst many nymphs that vowed chaste life to keep
Came tripping by: but in her maiden hand
The fairest votary took up that fire
Which many legions of true hearts had warmed;
And so the General of hot desire
Was sleeping by a virgin hand disarmed.
This brand she quenched in a cool well by,
Which from Love's fire took heat perpetual,
Growing a bath and healthful remedy
For men diseased; but I, my mistress' thrall,
Came there for cure, and this by that I prove,
Love's fire heats water, water cools not love.

The moral is added, but the rest is almost

paraphrase. The epitaph on Timon at the end of the play is given in some collections as translated by Shakespeare from the Anthology (vii. 318, 319), but it is not close to the Greek, and besides may not have been Shakespeare's.[1]

In many cases in which parallels may be traced between the Anthology and later verse the likeness is either only half conscious or wholly spontaneous, and, warned by what has been said in a previous chapter, we must not push the parallels too far. The good sense of Dr. Johnson protested against the ways of certain commentators upon Shakespeare, not unknown in our own day either, who "pretend in every coincidence of thought to detect an imitation of some ancient poet. I have been told that when Caliban, after a pleasing dream, says 'I tried to sleep again,' the author imitates Anacreon, who had, like any other man, the same wish on the same occasion." Nature and the heart of man teach the poets and moralists the same language in all ages and tongues, and the Greeks said so many of these things first because they lived first. And herein is to be found a source of perennial charm in the reading of the ancient classics.

The pieces in the Greek Anthology are, it is true, only minor poetry. The poets whose work

[1] And some of the editors doubt if the last two of the sonnets are his.

is collected in it cover a period of more than a thousand years. "Much misunderstanding has been caused," says Mr. Paton, "by people quoting anything from the *Greek* Anthology as specially *Greek*. We have to deal with three ages almost as widely separated as the Roman conquest, the Saxon conquest, and the Norman conquest of England." But, for a reason already partly touched upon, the difference of time at which the several pieces were written is often not felt. The poets deal with the commonplaces of human life and with the elemental feelings of human nature which are the same to-day as yesterday, and will be the same to-morrow. There is pathos in the Anthology, but Tragedy does not sweep by in sceptred pall. The cothurn is discarded, and we are placed on familiar terms with the everyday life of quiet folk. As in workmanship, so also in theme, the Anthology bears the same relation to the greater works of Greek literature that the engraved gems or Tanagra figurines bear to the marbles or bronzes of the great masters.

Of the amatory poets whose work is collected in the Anthology Meleager is easily first. He is, says one of the editors, "the prince of love poets," and Mr. Symonds has devoted some eloquent pages to this "most mellifluous of all erotic songsters. While reading his verse, it is impossible to avoid laying down the book and pausing to

exclaim: How modern is the phrase, how true the passion, how unique the style! Though Meleager's voice has been mute a score of centuries, it yet rings clear and vivid in our ears; because the man was a real poet, feeling intensely, expressing forcibly and beautifully, steeping his style in the fountain of tender sentiment which is eternal." In some of his pieces there is an exotic note which is not wholly Greek, but nothing can be lovelier than the tenderness of his dirge for Heliodore (vii. 476), exquisitely rendered in the best-known of Mr. Andrew Lang's versions—the piece that begins:

> Tears for my lady dead—
> Heliodore.
> Salt tears, and strange to shed,
> Over and o'er—

and ends

> Mother of blade and grass,
> Earth, in thy breast
> Lull her that gentlest was
> Gently to rest.[1]

Of the simpler love poems by other writers, this by Asclepiades (v. 169) is a good example:

> Sweet to summer thirst is snow; to sailors sweet,
> When winter's past, the Crown of Spring to greet.
> More sweet when lovers hide within the fold,
> And, heart to heart, the praise of Love is told.

[1] For another excellent paraphrase of this piece, see below, p. 373.

In a playful tone, this by Strato (xii. 177) on the First Kiss is a pretty example :

> At eve, when we had said good-night,
> My Jenny kissed me.
> Yet was it dream ? or do I say aright
> That Jenny kissed me ?
> All else that passed, the words she said,
> Her questions are remembered.
> Did Jenny kiss me ?
> My mind misdoubts ; for if 'twere given,
> Why walk on earth, when rapt to heaven
> If Jenny kissed me ?

Moeris is the Greek name ; I have altered it to Jenny in thought of Leigh Hunt's pretty lines, "Jenny kiss'd me when we met."

The faithlessness of a procrastinating mistress and a poet's revenge are happily put by Macedonius, a consul in the reign of Justinian, in an epigram thus paraphrased by Lord Cromer (v. 233) :

> Ever To-morrow thou dost say ;
> When will to-morrow's sun arise ?
> Thus custom ratifies delay ;
> My faithfulness thou dost despise.
> Others are welcomed, whilst to me
> At even Come, thou say'st, not now.
> What will life's evening bring to thee ?
> Old age—a many-wrinkled brow.

The Anthology is, however, rich also in what may be called, in Wordsworthian language, Poems founded on the Domestic Affections. "It has

been common," says Dr. Hatch, "to construct pictures of the state of morals in the first centuries of the Christian era from the statements of satirists who, like all satirists, had a large element of caricature, and from the denunciations of the Christian apologists, which, like all denunciations, have a large element of exaggeration. The pictures so constructed are mosaics of singular vices, and they have led to the not unnatural impression that those centuries constituted an era of exceptional wickedness. It is no doubt difficult to gauge the average morality of any age. It is questionable whether the average morality of civilised ages has largely varied. It is probable, not on merely *a priori* grounds, but from the nature of the evidence which remains, that there was in ancient Rome, as there is in modern London, a preponderating mass of those who loved their children and their homes, who were good neighbours and faithful friends, who conscientiously discharged their civil duties, and were in all the current senses of the word moral men."[1] It is one of the chief interests in the Anthology that it introduces us to the simple and wholesome domesticities of the life of ordinary people as lived in successive ages of the Greek and Græco-Roman world. A better picture of well-rounded domestic felicity has seldom been drawn than in this epigram

[1] *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church* (Hibbert Lectures, 1888), p. 139.

by Carphyllides, belonging probably to the first or second century of the Christian era (vii. 260). It has often been translated, by Cowper among others :

Traveller, regret me not ; for thou shalt find
Just cause of sorrow none in my decease,
Who, dying, children's children left behind,
And with one wife lived many a year in peace :
Three virtuous youths espoused my daughters three,
And oft their infants in my bosom lay,
Nor saw I one, of all derived from me,
Touched with disease, or torn by death away.
Their duteous hands my funeral rites bestowed,
And me, by blameless manners fitted well
To seek it, sent to the serene abode
Where shades of pious men for ever dwell.

The Anthology contains many a tribute paid to the memory of faithful wives and loving husbands. There is the pathos, too, of children cut off before their parents, as in this epigram by Lucian, who makes the child speak (vii. 308) :

A child of five, whose spirit knew not grief,
By Death who pities not, was slain.
Yet weep not for me. If my life was brief,
Brief too my portion of life's pain—

and of maidens who untimely die, as in this pretty epigram by Callimachus (vii. 459) :

The Samian maidens oft regret their friend,
Sweet Crethis, full of play and cheer,
Whose gossip lightened toil. But here
She sleeps the sleep they all will sleep at end.

Crethis must have been of the family of the little

silk-winder of Asolo. Greek maidens of a higher social status complained sometimes of their seclusion, as in an epigram (v. 297) by Agathias in the sixth century A.D.[1] The boys were more fortunate, the poet says; they could roam the streets with cheery companions and freely visit "the pictures." But the status of women varied from century to century and place to place, and we must not argue too much from Agathias of Byzantium to other Greek cities and times. "Why," it has been asked by a woman's wit, "do more than half the Tanagra ladies wear hat and shawl if they were not allowed to breathe the outer air, and brooding on their own dull thoughts, must stay within?"[2]

There are poems, too, on the pathos of death as bridegroom. Shakespeare has put it in tragic circumstance:

> *Friar L.* Come, is the bride ready to go to church?
> *Capulet.* Ready to go, but never to return.
> O son! the night before thy wedding-day
> Hath Death lain with thy wife.

Meleager put the same idea in his elegy on Clearista (vii. 182), thus rendered by Dr. Symonds:

> Poor Clearistē loosed her virgin zone
> Not for her wedding, but for Acheron;
> 'Twas but last eve the merry pipes were swelling,
> And dancing footsteps filled the festive dwelling;

[1] It has been cleverly translated by Mr. W. M. Hardinge (Tomson's *Selections*, p. 8).

[2] Miss Hutton's *Greek Terracotta Statuettes*, p. 45.

Morn changed those notes for wailings loud and long,
And dirges drowned the hymeneal song;
Alas, the very torches meant to wave
Around her bridal couch, now light her to the grave.

Herrick imitated the epigram in the piece in *Hesperides*, "Upon a Maid that died the day she was married":

That morn which saw me made a bride,
The evening witness'd that I died.
Those holy lights, wherewith they guide
Unto the bed the bashful bride,
Serv'd but as tapers for to burn
And light my relics to their urn.
This epitaph, which here you see,
Supplied the epithalamy.

One of the pleasantest notes in the Anthology is that of a friendly and even affectionate relation between master and slave. An epitaph by Dioscorides, a poet of Alexandria in the second century B.C. (vii. 178), has been well paraphrased by Mr. Cory in a little piece, entitled "A Serving Man's Epitaph." The man addresses his master, and the piece ends thus:

Live long, from trouble free;
But if thou com'st to me,
Paying to age thy debt,
Thine am I, master, yet.

The next piece in the Palatine collection, by an unknown author, is also interesting. The slave is made to record how he was thrice rescued from fell disease by his master's care. In this connexion

one recalls the solicitude which Pliny showed for his servants when they were sick—sending one of them to Egypt for change of air and afterwards begging a friend who had a villa on the Riviera to receive the same servant, "having frequently heard you mention the exceeding fine air and milk of your farm as very good in disorders of this nature. I beg you to write to your people to admit him to your house and grounds, and to supply him with what he may have occasion for at his expense. I shall furnish him when he sets out with sufficient money" (v. 19). The Greek epigrammatist concludes his piece with an excellent moral :

> For such good deed
> Service more true from all will be thy meed.

"I do not think," said Xenophon in *The Economist*, "that the servants of a bad master have ever learnt to be good." "There is only one way," says a modern writer, "to have good servants ; that is, to be worthy of being well served." Perhaps in the new order, when the world is under "reconstruction," it will be required that employers as well as servants should furnish "characters." We rightly think of slavery as a dark stain upon ancient life, but men are sometimes better than their institutions. There are two pieces in the Greek Anthology quoted in an essay in the *Idler* to which Ruskin was fond of referring in connexion with his protest against "the notion that liberty

is good for a man irrespectively of the use he is likely to make of it." The epitaphs, on Epictetus and Zosima (vii. 676, 553)—by an unknown poet and by the Syrian philosopher, the Damascene, respectively—combine perfection of form with true loftiness of thought :

I, Epictetus, was a slave ; and sick in body, and wretched in poverty ; and beloved by the gods.

Zosima, who while she lived was a slave only in her body, has now found deliverance for that also.

"How might we," says Ruskin, "over many an 'independent' Englishman reverse this last legend, and write :

This man, who while he lived was free only in his body, has now found captivity for that also."

Very pleasant, too, are the glimpses which the epigrams give us of country life and the simple annals of the poor. The Countess Evelyn Martinengo Cesaresco has some pages on this aspect of the Anthology in her pleasant collection of studies entitled *Outdoor Life in Greek and Roman Poets*. The Greeks for the most part, as Sir John Mahaffy has insisted, had a hatred of old age, but some of the poets of the Anthology throw "an exquisite pathos into their pictures of the wane of life—as in that of the old fisherman who falls asleep in his reed hut after his long toil, as the light fails when the oil is spent ;[1] or that of the

[1] Of this epigram by Leonidas (vii. 295) there is a translation by Mr. Andrew Lang (*Grass of Parnassus*, p. 168).

old spinning-woman, who has earned her bread by spinning, through her eighty years, and ever humming her song as she span, till the withered hand sinks on the withered knee, and her work and her days end together.[1] An old shepherd, Cleitagoras, laid to rest on the mountain-side, prays that the sheep may bleat over him, while a shepherd, seated on a rough rock, gently pipes to them as they feed (vii. 657).[2] In this, which is by Leonidas of Tarentum, there is the radiance, not the gloom of pathos; and that same radiance illuminates the epitaph from an unknown source in which the dear Earth is asked to receive into her bosom old Amynticus, who had laboured so long for her, planting olives and vines and corn, watered by well-cut channels. 'Lie gently on his head and cover him with flowers in the spring' (vii. 321).[3]

[1] Also by Leonidas (vii. 726), and translated by Mr. Lang (*ibid.* p. 159).

[2] There is a graceful version of this epigram by Mr. W. M. Hardinge (Tomson's *Selections*, p. 126).

[3] Thus translated by Cowper:

> Take to thy bosom, gentle Earth! a swain
> With much hard labour in thy service worn;
> He set the vines that clothe yon ample plain,
> And he these olives that the vale adorn.
> He filled with grain the glebe; the rills he led
> Through this green herbage, and those fruitful bowers;
> Thou, therefore, Earth! lie lightly on his head,
> His hoary head, and deck his grave with flowers.

The "Verses left on a Seat at the Leaseowes," which are printed in Shenstone's Works among the Encomiums on the poet, are an adaptation of the same Greek epigram:

> O Earth, to his remains indulgent be,
> Who so much care and cost bestowed on thee;

A thought is present here which must have struck whoever has watched a rustic funeral—the cultivator alone does not go into a strange bed. He has been ever at one with Nature, a complement to the earth he tilled, not a strange wandering being on it. He is going to be part of it now, and it seems sweet and hospitable, not cold and foreign." Cowper has well translated some of the pieces in this sort. Here is his version of one by Isidorus (vii. 156) on a fowler who never kissed the hand of a stranger for food, and, dying at ninety, bequeathed to his children his bird-lime, birds, and sticks :

> With seeds and bird-lime, from the desert air,
> Eumelus gathered free, though scanty, fare.
> No lordly patron's hand he deigned to kiss,
> Nor luxury knew, save liberty, nor bliss.
> Thrice thirty years he lived, and to his heirs
> His seeds bequeathed, his bird-lime, and his snares.

In another piece, by Antipater (ix. 149),[1] we are told that one cow and a sheep with wool like hair were the wealth of Aristeides ; a wolf killed

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> Who crowned thy barren hills with useful shade,
> And cheered with tinkling rills each silent glade ;
> Here taught the day to wear a thoughtful gloom,
> And there enlivened Nature's vernal bloom,
> Propitious Earth, lie lightly on his head,
> And ever on his tomb thy vernal glories spread.
>
> (*British Poets*, 1822, vol. 47, p. 29.)

[1] It has been translated in verse by Mr. Charles Whibley (Tomson's *Selections*, p. 55).

the sheep and labour pains, the cow. The herdsman, all undone, twisted a noose to his neck, and died piteously by his cabin, where the sound of lowing was heard no more. To a lover of animals and rural life this piece has seemed "the most pathetic thing in all poetry."

The love of animals, which some fondly suppose to be of modern growth, often meets us in the Anthology. It is familiar, of course, to all who know their Homer, for there is no passage in the *Iliad* more famous, and there are few more moving, than that on the horses of Achilles. Equally famous is the passage in the *Odyssey*, imitated by more than one English poet, which describes how the old Argus recognises Ulysses in spite of time and in spite of rags, and wags his affectionate tail and dies of joy on the dunghill. "Immortal tribute to dog-love," says one writer, and Sir John Mahaffy says that "this wonderful picture could never have been drawn except by men who themselves knew and loved dogs and appreciated their intelligence." Mr. Butler in his heretical *Authoress of the Odyssey* finds the whole scene between Ulysses and Argus "perhaps the most disappointing in the *Odyssey*." If the dog was too old or feeble to come to Ulysses, Ulysses should have gone up to him and hugged him—fleas or no fleas; and Argus should not have been allowed to die till this had been put in evidence."

However this may be, there can be no doubt of the love of dogs shown by the poets of the Anthology. It is minor poetry, and it is the domestic rather than the heroic aspect of animals that is the theme—though by the way there is one tale about the king of beasts which, if the *Spectator* should ever be gravelled for lack of a sufficiently tall animal story, it might do worse than revive from Leonidas of Alexandria.[1] There is a piece in the Anthology on a white Maltese lap-dog (vii. 211), a breed as much prized as pets in ancient times as now. In his Essay "On Persons who give their Society for Pay" Lucian gives an amusing picture of the indignities to which kept Philosophers — like the "domestic chaplains" of the eighteenth century — were subjected by the whims of great ladies. An excursion into the country was being planned: "'Thesmopolis,' cries my lady, 'I have a great favour to ask of you; now please don't say no, and don't wait to be asked twice, there's a good creature. . . . I only ask you, because I know you are to be trusted; you are so good-natured and affectionate. I want you to take my little dog Myrrhina in with you, and see that she wants for nothing. Poor little lady, she is soon to become a mother.'" The Philosopher has to do as he is told, and Lucian describes the little beast peeping out from the philosophic cloak and

[1] See *The Outdoor Life in Greek and Roman Poets*, p. 69.

"yapping away as Maltese terriers will. According to what I heard Myrrhina actually littered in his mantle."[1] The Anthology contains some excellent inscriptions for the graves of favourites. English poetry is abundant in this sort,[2] but our dog-elegies are often used to "read their homily to man" (as in Matthew Arnold's piece on Geist), or to point a moral of scorn or jest. The English version of the Latin lines which Scott and Lockhart wrote for Maida—with a false quantity[3] which was a nine days' wonder among the learned in the modern Athens—is more in the spirit of the Greek Anthology:

> Beneath the sculptured form which late you wore
> Sleep soundly, Maida, at your master's door.

Here is a more or less literal translation of an inscription from a Greek inscription which was found near Florence:[4]

> 'Tis but a dog lies here. Yet pause, I pray,
> And smile not as you glance around—
> A master wept for me; a master's hand
> Inscribed this stone and heaped this mound.

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[1] See "The Dependent Scholar" in the excellent English translation of Lucian by H. W. and F. G. Fowler, vol. ii. p. 22.

[2] See Mr. R. M. Leonard's excellent collection, *The Dog in British Poetry*.

[3] Maidae marmorea dormis sub imagine Maida,
Ad jānuam domini sit tibi terra levis.

[4] No. 341 in the Appendix to the Anthology (Tauchnitz, ed. 1872); iii. 57 in Mackail's *Select Epigrams*.

It is instructive to compare this with Byron's lines on Boatswain :

> Ye, who, perchance, behold this simple urn,
> Pass on—it honours none you wish to mourn ;
> To mark a friend's remains these stones arise ;
> I never knew but one, and here he lies.

Nor is it only the dog who appears in the Anthology as the friend of man. The labouring ox of Alcon has been immortalised by Addaeus of Macedon (vi. 228) in one of those little poems of country life which, as Mr. Mackail remarks, "give us so charming and intimate a glimpse of the ancient world carried on quietly among the drums and trampling of Alexander's conquests" :

> The ox of Alcon, when outworn by age and toil,
> Was led not to the slaughter-house ; but now,
> Its work respected, in lush meadow grass it lows,
> Rejoicing in its freedom from the plough.

The editors give us parallel passages from earlier classical literature, and a modern writer, who has illustrated the country life of ancient Greece and Rome by her knowledge of modern Italy and other Mediterranean lands, tells us that there are in Crete many Alcons still whom nothing will induce to kill their four-footed fellow-workers when they are weak with age.[1] But the poets of the Anthology went further in their love of other creatures. As the good Melampus had "love exceeding a simple love of the things that

[1] *The Outdoor Life in Greek and Roman Poets*, p. 70.

glide in grasses and rubble of woody wreck," so they, of the little things that chirp and flutter. What, some one has asked, would be the Anthology without the cicada? Tree-crickets and field-crickets were often kept in cages, and the poets of the Anthology brought many graceful fancies to the composition of epitaphs for their little pets. Cowper has given us pretty versions of two pieces, in another sort, in praise of the grasshopper. One, by Euenus of Ascalon (ix. 122), reproves a swallow for snatching a cricket :

> Ah ! for pity drop the prize ;
> Let it not with truth be said
> That a songster gasps and dies
> That a songster may be fed.

The other piece,[1] which has been paraphrased by Cowley also, sings the praises of the grasshopper as herald of the genial hours :

> Therefore man thy voice attends
> Gladly,—thou and he are friends,
> Nor thy never-ceasing strains
> Phoebus or the Muse disdains
> As too simple or too long,
> For themselves inspire the song.
> Earth-born, bloodless, undecaying,
> Ever singing, sporting, playing,
> What has Nature else to show
> Godlike in its kind as thou ?

All this is in the Athenian tradition, for the grass-

[1] Not from the *Anthology*, but in *Anacreontea*, 32 (43).

hoppers, as Socrates tells in the *Phaedrus*, "were said to have been human beings in an age before the Muses. And when the Muses came and song appeared they were ravished with delight; and singing always, never thought of eating and drinking, until at last they forgot and died. And now they live again in the grasshoppers." The prettiest of all the grasshopper pieces in the Anthology has been made to live again in English by Robert Browning. It is the epilogue to *The Two Poets of Croisic*, "one of the most delicately graceful and witty and tender of his lyrics," says Mr. Symons, and I agree; but he omits to say that the idea is taken from the Greek, as the first verse avows:

> What a pretty tale you told me
> Once upon a time;
> Said you found it somewhere (scold me!)
> Was it prose or was it rhyme,
> Greek or Latin? Greek, you said,
> While your shoulder propped my head.

The legend must have been a favourite one, for it is told twice in the Anthology, to like effect, but by different poets,—one of them unknown (ix. 584), the other (vi. 54), Paulus Silentiarius, so called from his official position as a Gentleman of the Bedchamber at the Byzantine Court in the sixth century A.D. The earlier and better piece is in the form of a dedication to Apollo at Delphi, and the story is put into the mouth of Eunomus, the harp-player, "Eunomus who beat Spartis."

He was playing deftly on his lyre when the seventh string broke, but a grasshopper flew unsought to his aid and supplied the missing note. And so Eunomus gained the prize. "Wherefore," as the grateful minstrel records, "the grasshopper sits on my lyre in brass, as you may see." Browning gives a free version of the piece, though sometimes keeping close to the original :

All was lost, then ! No ! a cricket
(What, "cicada ?" Pooh !)
—Some mad thing that left its thicket
For mere love of music, flew
With its little heart on fire,
Lighted on the crippled lyre.

So that when (ah joy !) our singer
For his truant string
Feels with disconcerted finger,
What does cricket else but fling
Fiery heart forth, sound the note
Wanted by the throbbing throat ?
. . . . .
So, he made himself a statue :
Marble stood, life-size ;
On the lyre, he pointed at you,
Perched his partner in the prize ;
Never more apart you found
Her, he throned, from him, she crowned.

The poem on which Browning founded his lyric is one of the longer pieces in the Anthology. The more usual and the characteristic quality of the collection is in the epitaphs and other short

pieces, to which the term "epigram" is applied, though in a somewhat different sense, for the most part, from that which we associate with Latin, French, or English pieces called by the same name. The Greek epigram was in its origin a few words, or a couplet inscribed on a memorial stone. Some of the best are actual inscriptions. Those which are literary exercises conformed to the original type. "The true or the best form of the early Greek epigram," says Lord Neaves, "does not aim at wit or seek to produce surprise. Its purpose is to set forth in the shortest, simplest, and plainest language, but yet with perfect purity and even elegance of diction, some fact or feeling of such interest as would prompt the real or supposed speaker to record it in the form of an epigram." In little things as in great, in the epigram as in sculpture, what the Greek genius aimed at was the beauty that comes from simplicity and reserve. The epitaphs of the best period are like the sepulchral reliefs :

> Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
> Or knock the breast ; no weakness, no contempt,
> Disgrace, or blame ; nothing but well and fair,
> And what may quiet us in a death so noble.

Ostentation, redundance, far-fetched conceits, such as we are all familiar with in the tombs of the Renaissance period, in our own Westminster Abbey, or in modern cemeteries, find no place in the best memorial pieces collected in the Greek

Anthology. The inscriptions by Simonides are supreme in their dignity of simplicity and restraint. His couplet on the Lacedaemonians who fell at Thermopylae is unapproachable.[1] Others are scarcely less noble, and some idea of them may be conveyed even in halting translations—as this, "On the Athenian Dead at Plataea" (vii. 253):

> If death with honour prove a life well led,
> To us of all men such fair fortune came.
> For country and for freedom forth we sped:
> We fell, possessors of a deathless name.[2]

Or this, "On the Lacedaemonian Dead at Plataea" (vii. 251):

> Their land they crowned with fame that shall not die;
> Themselves were wrapped in darkness of the grave.
> In death they died not, being raised on high,
> Above the tomb to glory with the brave.

Mr. John Murray, giving a translation of his own, suggested this last piece as an epitaph for our soldiers.[3] Another piece by Simonides, "On the Defenders of Tegea" (vii. 512), was recalled by the President of Magdalen at the beginning of the first

[1] For this couplet (vii. 249) see *Literary Recreations*, p. 179.

[2] I had written down this version before I came across the following by Mr. Headlam, which is better:

> If the best merit be to lose life well,
> To us beyond all else that fortune came:
> In war, to give Greece liberty, we fell,
> Heirs of all time's imperishable fame.

[3] In a letter to the *Spectator*, June 14, 1919.

term after the war, when he thought of "those who did not, and never would, return." Here is Sir Herbert Warren's translation, "which aims, above all things, at being literal":

'Twas through these men of valour the smoke of the sky never rose
Up from the burning of Tegea, town of the dancing-spaces.
A free and flourishing burgh to bequeath to their children they chose,
But themselves to fight and to die in the foremost places.

This, Sir Herbert Warren tells us, was Sir Richard Jebb's favourite Greek epigram. And with what poignancy of meaning it speaks across the gulf of twenty-four centuries! "We have only to substitute 'Oxford'—'Cambridge' will do equally well—for 'Tegea,' 'playing' for 'dancing,' and 'brothers' for 'children,' to bring that meaning very near home."

These are in the heroic style, but the epitaphs of a domestic character have the same notes of directness, simplicity, compression, and restraint. Here is an inscription composed by Callimachus for a boy (vii. 453):

His son, now twelve years old, Philippus sees
Here laid, his mighty hope, Nicoteles.

Lord Neaves, from whom I borrow this translation, has well put the characteristics of such epigrams: "Everything essential is contained in it—the names of the persons, their mutual rela-

tions, the age of the buried boy, and the great hopes which he had held out to his father. There is no expression of grief, no effort at ornament, no expansion of any idea such as modern taste would suggest to a poet; the situation speaks for itself, and the very reticence of the bereaved parent gives to his sorrow a more solemn and sacred aspect." Here, finely translated by Dr. Symonds, is another epigram (vii. 451) by the same master-hand, which expresses with utmost simplicity and point a lofty thought which was dear to the ancients no less than to ourselves:

> Here lapped in hallowed slumber Saon lies,
> Asleep, not dead; a good man never dies.

The thought is familiar in Christian scripture and in modern song:

> They which are fallen asleep in Christ.

> How *sleep* the Brave, who sink to rest,
> By all their country's wishes blest?

But the thought was first and perfectly expressed by Callimachus in the third century before the Christian era.

As is natural in the poetry of a seafaring race, a large number of the epigrams in the Greek Anthology have death at sea for their theme. The best of them are marked by the same simplicity and directness. The following is by Callimachus (vii. 271), and is prettily translated, though

perhaps a shade too prettily,[1] by one of the authors of *Love in Idleness* :

> O if swift ships had never, had never sailed the sea,
> Poor child of Diocleides, we had not wept for thee ;
> But now thy body is drifting on some unknown abyss,
> And this thy name and empty tomb is all of Sopolis.

Mr. Kipling, in *The Years Between*, thought of Callimachus when he began his epitaph for a "V.A.D. (Mediterranean)" with the words "Ah, would swift ships had never been." Here, by an unknown poet, is an epitaph which has been well translated by Lord Cromer (vii. 350) :

> No matter who I was ; but may the sea
> To you prove kindlier than it was to me.

Lord Morley quoted this epigram to Mr. Gladstone when they were driving along the seashore at Biarritz. "Mr. G.," we are told, "felt its pathos and its noble charm—so direct and simple, such benignity, such a good lesson to men to forget their own misdeeds and mischance, and to pray for the passer-by a happier star." Mr. Gladstone repaid his friend by two epigrams in a different vein, but also, as Lord Morley notes, "in the tone of Greek epigram, a sort of point, but not too much point." Lord Morley's remark may profitably be compared with that of Ste.-Beuve quoted below (p. 346). Here is an epigram on the empty tomb of a mariner lost at sea. It

[1] For another version, which errs on the opposite side of baldness, see below, p. 366.

is by Glaucus (vii. 285), and is thus rendered by Dr. Grundy :

Nor earth nor lightest rock the corpse of Erasippus hide ;
His tomb is deep 'neath yonder sea, his grave the ocean wide.
He perished with his ship : but where his crumbling body lay
The gulls alone are like to know, the gulls alone can say.

The commentators compare, aptly enough, the passage in Propertius, which speaks of the sea-birds standing over a mariner's bones and the wide ocean being his grave, and the lines at the end of Tennyson's "The Captain" :

Side by side beneath the water
Crew and Captain lie ;
There the sunlit ocean tosses
O'er them mouldering,
And the lonely sea-bird crosses
With one waft of the wing.

The small scale, the occasional or minor character of the verse in the Anthology, is one of the sources of its attraction to general readers and translators. To translate Homer or a Greek play calls for a rare combination of gifts and a sustained effort ; but to render or imitate Greek epigrams may be the literary recreation of odd half-hours, and a measure of success may be attained by minor poets or even by some who are not poets at all. The Anthology has attracted in equal degree poets, men of affairs, and dry-as-dusts. Shelley has left us a few exquisite versions ; Cowper

found solace from melancholy in translating several pieces; Gray annotated his copy of the Anthology with emendations, parallel passages, and occasional Latin versions. During sleepless nights of his last illness Dr. Johnson amused himself by translating Greek epigrams into Latin verse. Minor poets of our own time have been busy with the Anthology, as may be seen from the list given below (p. 357). "The interpretation of these lyrics," says the British Ambassador at Rome, "has been my sole and grateful distraction during a period of ceaseless work and intense anxiety in the tragic years of 1914 and 1915." Lord Cromer, who has not been included, I think, in any list, however comprehensive, of minor poets, sought refuge in like manner from the toils of Egypt in studies and translations of the Anthology. A major in the Indian Army found a link with school and home by returning again and again to attempts to render the epigrams into English verse.[1] Dr. Symonds, the father of the author of *Studies in the Greek Poets*, found time in the busy life of a country physician to make some excellent versions. Hugo Grotius, the jurist and theologian, translated a great part of the Anthology into Latin verse. Of Henry "Stephens" it is recorded that he wrote 105 different Latin translations of a couplet in an epigram by Agathias on the loves of Venus and Anchises. And M. Anatole France

[1] See No. 25 in the Bibliography, below, p. 366.

has laughed at it all by allowing to his M. Schmoll, Member of the Institute, whose learning was else "as rusty and heavy as pieces of old iron sold by second-hand dealers," the one adornment of "a few dried flowers culled from the Greek Anthology."

This abundance and variety of extant translations in verse from the Anthology, in which so many men in different ages and of different gifts have found amusement, renders possible in its turn another literary recreation. Armed with the prose crib which Mr. Mackail has supplied beneath the Greek, even one whose scholarship is rusty may sit in judgement on the various versions, comparing and collating, and noting where this one or that is at fault, and deciding why that or this is better than another. Such an exercise may well be made a lesson in taste. Perhaps to some it will have the wicked pleasure of a sort of vicarious revenge for hours at school when others were our examiners and our versions or imitations from Greek or Latin epigrams were torn to pieces. If now and then, dissatisfied with all the published translations of a piece, one is tempted to try his own hand, so much the better: the odds are that the attempt will serve to remind him how much easier it is to go wrong than right. In comparing translations by different hands of the same piece, I have been struck by the fact that it is not always the professional poets who come off first. Cowper

is, on the whole, the most successful, for the examples of Shelley are too few to be brought into comparison; but Cowper's range of selection is restricted. Moore's versions are too flashy and florid. It is among our minor poets and literary scholars that the best translations will be found.

The besetting difficulty in translating the Greek epigrams is to preserve their simplicity and restraint by the avoidance of superfluous matter. The point may be illustrated by reference to a famous epigram on Aristophanes (*App. Ep.* 63): it is ascribed to Plato, and, as Bergk has said, is worthy alike of the author and of the subject. Literally translated, it is this:

> The Graces, seeking to take some sanctuary which should never fall, found the soul of Aristophanes.

How is this to be rendered into English verse, without adding anything that is not there, and yet so as to reproduce the charm of the Greek? Merivale tried thus:

> The Graces, seeking for a shrine,
> Whose glories ne'er should cease,
> Found, as they strayed, the soul divine
> Of Aristophanes.

The version is good, and I see that Dr. Grundy gives it as the best available; but it has faults. The rhyme hisses, and the words, "as they strayed," suggest an idea which is not in the Greek and is itself not felicitous. And there is another fault, which has been pointed out by Lord Neaves.

This is the addition of the epithet "divine." "The original has it not: it contents itself with saying that the Graces found what they *did* find, and which it is inferred was just what they wanted." Let it not be said that this is captious criticism: the reticence is of the very essence of the Greek epigram. Lord Neaves, remarking that "the modest charm of *not too much* is one of the lessons which the best Greek compositions may teach us," tried thus to improve upon Merivale's version:

> The Graces sought some holy ground,
> Whose site should ever please;
> And in their search the soul they found
> Of Aristophanes.

The rhyme is improved, and the essential point, noticed above, is preserved. But it is not perfect, —Is a soul a pleasing site?—and every one must see that the natural order of the words, "they found the soul of Aristophanes," is changed solely to serve the rhyme. "In some cases," wrote Ruskin, in criticising his own poetical exercises, "reversion is permissible, or even desirable—but it is always a fault if it will not read as a vigorous prose form also. Intense simplicity is the first characteristic of the greatest poetry. I wish I could let you hear the melodious simplicity of the Greek epitaphs,"—going on to quote for his father's instruction those on Zosima and Epictetus which I have already given.

I take next for examination the epigram by Carphyllides, of which a translation by Cowper has been given on a previous page (317). I have five other translations before me—two in prose by Mr. Lang and Mr. Mackail respectively, and three in verse by Lord Neaves, Lord Cromer, and Dr. A. J. Butler. The first thing that strikes me is that all the versions save one are much longer than the Greek original. And let me not be accused of prosaic philistinism if I apply a measuring-rod to poetical exercises: what has been called "the law of quantitative correspondence" in translation is of special importance in the case of pieces characterised by brevity and compression. English is here at some necessary disadvantage as compared with a language so highly inflected and so rich in compound words as Greek. Lord Cromer noted that Professor Jebb took twelve words—"Well hath he spoken for one who giveth heed not to fall"—to express what Sophocles said in four—*καλῶς ἔλεξεν εὐλαβουμένῳ πεσεῖν* (*Oed. Tyr.* 616). And an instance may be given from the epigram before us. The man whose happy life is described in it had joy of one wife, *συγγήρου*: each of our prose translators requires six words for the one in Greek—"whose years were as my own" (Lang); "who grew old along with me" (Mackail). It is not surprising, therefore, that the Greek epigram of 49 words extends to 86 and 84 words in the prose translations. Verse admits

of more compression, but only one of our translations is less wordy in verse than in prose. The eight lines of the Greek become ten (Lord Neaves, 85 words) and twelve (Cowper, 93 words, and Cromer, 104 words). The fault I find in the two latter is that they expand unevenly. Lord Cromer spins out the first two lines of the Greek into four, and Cowper does the same with the last two. "A model may be copied," as Dr. Butler remarks, "on a larger or smaller scale as the materials require; but what would be thought of a sculptor who in copying an antique figure enlarged the scale of the head, preserved the scale of the foot, and diminished the scale of the body? A poem, too, has its own statuesque completeness." Lord Neaves expands the original more evenly, but chiefly by epithets, which are alien to the spirit of the Greek, and are added only for metrical reasons. To Dr. Butler, I think, the palm should be awarded. His translation is in eight lines (64 words); it neither adds nor omits anything, and, without being unpleasantly bald, conveys the style of the original:

> Mourn not, O traveller, for my vanished life.
> In very death I find no misery.
> My children's children live: I loved one wife,
> Mine age's helpmeet. Sons I married three,
> And ofttimes rocked their children on my breast,
> But ne'er saw death or ailment fall on one.
> Now have they lulled me to a peaceful rest
> Among the blessed ones whose day is done.

There is an epigram (ix. 44), ascribed variously to Statyllius Flaccus and to "Plato the Great," which was perhaps composed as an express exercise in brevity, and which has given occasion for competitive *tours de force* among English poets. This is the story of the Thief and the Miser—the thief who, finding buried gold, left behind a halter, and the miser who, not finding his gold, killed himself with the halter. The story is thus condensed into two lines of Greek :

χρυσὸν ἀνὴρ εὑρών, ἔλιπεν βρόχον· αὐτὰρ ὁ χρυσὸν
ὃν λίπεν οὐχ εὑρὼν ἦψεν ὃν εὗρε βρόχον.

The moral of the reversal of Circumstance was drawn out by Shelley :

A man who was about to hang himself,
Finding a purse, then threw away his rope ;
The owner, coming to reclaim his pelf,
The halter found, and used it. So is Hope
Changed for Despair—one laid upon the shelf,
We take the other. Under Heaven's high cope
Fortune is God—all you endure and do
Depends on circumstance as much as you.

Shelley, it will be noted, took nearly four lines to tell the story without the moral. Mr. Courthope within the space of four lines found room for a hint of the moral, thus :

A man about to hang himself one day,
By chance found gold, and flung his noose away.
The owner came and—each thing has its use—
Finding his gold was gone, employed the noose.[1]

[1] *History of English Poetry*, ii. 58.

This was a version of the four lines which Ausonius (*Epig.* xxii.) found necessary for rendering the Greek :

> Thesauro invento qui limina mortis inibat
> Liquit ovans laqueum quo periturus erat.
> At qui quod terrae abdiderat non repperit aurum
> Quem laqueum invenit nexuit et periit.

Dr. Johnson was more terse :

> Hic, aurum ut reperit, laqueum abjicit, alter ut aurum
> Non reperit, nectit quem reperit laqueum.

But how is such brevity to be attained in English with the difficulty of our pronouns? Sir Thomas Wyatt made no attempt at brevity :

> For shamefast harm of great and hateful need,
> In deep despair as did a wretch go
> With ready cord out of his life to speed,
> His stumbling foot did find an hoard, lo !
> Of gold I say, when he prepared this deed,
> And in exchange he left the cord tho' ;
> He that had hid the gold, and found it not,
> Of that he found he shaped his neck a knot.

Nothing could be less like the Greek or the Latin than this rambling and long-winded version. Wyatt does, it is true, pull himself up at the end, and in his last two lines gives those of Ausonius almost word for word, but he takes six lines to wriggle up to the point, and even so does not contrive to tell the story so distinctly as it is put in the original. But at last the thing was

done. In a company where Coleridge was present some one quoted the epigram as an instance of compression and brevity in narration unattainable in any language but the Greek. Coleridge denied this: he thought (as he had good right to think) that the English language was capable of everything, and on the instant produced this version:

> Jack finding gold left a rope on the ground;
> Bill missing his gold used the rope which he found.

Wordsworth also tried his hand and gave this as his attempt to Moore:

> A thief found gold, and left a rope, but he who could not find
> The gold he left tied on the rope the thief had left behind.[1]

Coleridge's is the more happy attempt; but, as he said, it was "a mere trial of comparative brevity —wit and poetry quite out of the question."[2] The difficulty of matching the concision of the best Greek epigrams becomes wellnigh insurmountable when those other factors are brought in.

From this point of view it is instructive to compare some of the versions of a piece in the Anthology than which none has been more often translated. It is a dedicatory epigram, ascribed to Plato, but probably of later date, and expresses the poetical conceit of Lais, the famous courtesan,

[1] Moore's *Memoirs*, vii. 85.
[2] *Omniana*, 1812, ii. 123.

putting aside her mirror (vi. 1). It is familiar in English from Prior's quatrain :

> Venus ! take this votive glass,
> Since I am not what I was :
> What I shall hereafter be,
> Venus ! let me never see.

This was only an imitation ; and, though it contains the essential idea of the epigram, says at once more and less than the original. Mr. Mackail's literal translation is this :

> I Lais who laughed exultant over Greece, I who held that swarm of young lovers in my porches, lay my mirror before the Paphian ; since such as I am I will not see myself, and such as I was I cannot.

So much and no more does the epigrammatist say. There is honey in the lines—in the picture of the laughing beauty ; and there is a sting in the tail,[1] but the moral is not, as we say, "rubbed in." Ste.-Beuve thought the piece a little wanting in point, and approved Voltaire's version for putting in "un peu plus d'esprit" :

> Je le donne à Vénus puisqu'elle est toujours belle ;
> Il redouble trop mes ennuis.
> Je ne saurais me voir dans ce miroir fidèle,
> Ni telle que j'étais, ni telle que je suis.

So had the Alexandrians thought, and Voltaire's

[1] Be epigrams like bees ; let them have stings ;
And honey too, and let them be small things.
(Lord Wensleydale's translation of the Latin epigram.)

version is in fact reminiscent of expansions (vi. 18-20) of the original made in the sixth century A.D. by Julianus, the ex-prefect, who (like Lord Cromer) turned from the cares of rule in Egypt to studies in Greek epigrams. Few of the translators have been satisfied with the restraint of the original. They expand the contrast or emphasise the moral. Here from Orlando Gibbons's First Set of Madrigals (1612)[1] is the epigram in the style of the Elizabethans :

> Lais, now old, that erst all-tempting lass,
> To Goddess Venus consecrates her glass;
> For she herself hath now no use of one,
> No dimpled cheeks hath she to gaze upon :
> She cannot see her springtide damask grace,
> Nor dare she look upon her winter face.

Even those who have confined their versions to the four-line limit of the original leave much out in order to put something in — as in this piece from Dr. Garnett's "Chaplet from the Greek Anthology" :

> Venus, from Lais, once as fair as thou,
> Receive this mirror, useless to me now;
> For what despoiling Time hath made of me
> I will not, what he marred I cannot, see.

Of the more literal versions which have been attempted, here are two among the best. I take the first from the "Greek Anthology" of Lord

[1] See A. H. Bullen's *Lyrics from the Song-Books of the Elizabethan Age*, p. 162. "All-tempting" is Mr. Bullen's correction for "attempting."

Neaves; the second is from Sir Rennell Rodd's "Love, Worship and Death":

> Lais, who smiled at Greece with scornful pride,
> I, at whose doors a swarm of lovers sighed,
> This glass to Venus: since what I shall be
> I would not, what I was, I cannot, see.

> I that through the land of Hellas
> Laughed in triumph and disdain,
> Lais, of whose open porches
> All the love-struck youth were fain,
> Bring the mirror once I gazed in,
> Cyprian, at thy shrine to vow,
> Since I see not there what once was,
> And I would not what is now.

The first of these versions lacks something of the charm of the original; the second, in its slight expansions and too tripping measure, loses much of the restraint. The *juste milieu* is perhaps unattainable.

The same difficulty has been found by those who have tried their hand on another famous epigram also ascribed, and in this case no doubt correctly, to Plato (vii. 669). It is one of two addressed to Aster, and the Greek must here be given in order that the words may be in mind when we consider the translations:

> Ἀστέρας εἰσαθρεῖς Ἀστὴρ ἐμός· εἴθε γενοίμην
> οὐρανός, ὡς πολλοῖς ὄμμασιν εἰς σὲ βλέπω.

The happy play of words, the perfection of point, the wistfulness, and withal the simplicity and

restraint, make this epigram one of the choicest gems of the Anthology. It has attracted innumerable translators, and poets have been among them :

Moore :

> Why dost thou gaze upon the sky ?
> Oh, that I were that spangled sphere,
> And every star should be an eye
> To wonder on thy beauties here.

Longfellow :

> Lookest thou at the stars ? If I were heaven,
> With all the eyes of heaven would I look down on thee.

There are many better versions, yet of none of them can it be said that perfection has been attained. One of the most haunting is Dean Farrar's :

> Gazing at stars, my Star ? I would that I were the welkin,
> Starry with infinite eyes, gazing for ever at thee.

This is beautiful, but it is too florid. Others are too tame, or are marred by awkward words or forced inversions. Dr. Garnett's has some good points :

> Thou eyest the stars, my Star ? that mine might be
> Yon host of starry eyes to bend on thee.

But "eyest" is a bad word. Dr. Rouse has good points also :

> My star, thou gazest on the stars : O would that I might be
> The starry sky, so gaze might I with myriad eyes on thee.

But "gaze might I" and the jingle in the same

line are wholly alien to the original. In point of simplicity the Greek goes easier into Latin, as in this version by Apuleius :

> Astra vides. Utinam fiam, meus Aster, Olympus
> Ut multis sic te luminibus videam.

Of the English versions I select these as the three best—the first by Sir Rennell Rodd :

> Thou gazest starward, star of mine, whose heaven I fain would be,
> That all my myriad starry eyes might only gaze on thee.

The note is a little too forced in the second line, as every one will feel, I think, on reference to the Greek, and the following versions are better :

> Gazing at stars, O Star ?
> Star of my soul ! Ah me,
> That I were heaven, to gaze with all
> Those myriad eyes on thee !

This is by Mr. Headlam, but I do not quite like "Ah me." The third version seems to me the best :

> Thine eyes are fixed upon the starry skies,
> Thou star of mine.
> Would I were heaven with multitudinous eyes
> To gaze on thine.

This last version is by Dr. A. J. Butler of Brasenose.

According to Dr. Grundy "perhaps the finest

extant version in English of any of the verses from the Anthology "[1] is by Dr. Symonds :

> Thou art not dead, my Proté ! thou art flown
> To a far country better than our own ;
> Thy home is now an Island of the Blest ;
> There 'mid Elysian meadows take thy rest :
> Or lightly trip along the flowery glade
> Rich with the asphodels that never fade !
> Nor pain, nor cold, nor toil shall vex thee more,
> Nor thirst, nor hunger on that happy shore ;
> Nor longings vain (now that blest life is won)
> For such poor days as mortals here drag on ;
> To thee for aye a blameless life is given,
> In the pure light of ever-present Heaven.

"It is not often," says the translator's son, "that we hear in the Anthology a strain of such pure and Christian music as in this apocryphal epitaph." The English version is both beautiful and close to the original ; and Dr. Symonds certainly deserves a high place among translators from the Anthology. The versions which his son collected at the end of Dr. Symonds's *Miscellanies* all reach a high level. But if

[1] This piece is not in the Anthology proper. It is No. 278 in the "Appendix Epigrammatum apud Scriptores Veteres et in Marmoribus Servatorum," Tauchnitz edition, 1872. The inscription was found on a marble at Rome belonging to a Roman family of Pagan times. "There is nothing specifically Christian," says Professor Hardie, "in this epitaph, but it may have been influenced by Christian beliefs. This is almost certainly the case when a soul is thought of as going to heaven (*e.g.* vii. 672). In a well-known epigram (see below, p. 364) the soul of Plato is thought of as ascending to Olympus. Philosophic thought in some of its forms did contemplate the ascent of the soul to highest heaven : there was the theory of a pure element of fiery ether, from which the soul was derived, and to which it returned" (*Lectures on Classical Subjects*, p. 47).

a single version is to be the test, then the palm must be given to the author of *Ionica*, and to William Cory may be ascribed not only the most beautiful version from an actual epigram in the Anthology, but also the most perfect imitation in Greek. Every lover of poetry knows the version of the epigram by Callimachus on Heraclitus (vii. 80), but I must allow myself the pleasure of transcribing it here :

They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead,
They brought me bitter news to hear and bitter tears to shed.
I wept as I remembered how often you and I
Had tired the sun with talking and sent him down the sky.

And now that thou art lying, my dear old Carian guest,
A handful of grey ashes, long, long ago at rest,
Still are thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales, awake ;
For Death, he taketh all away, but them he cannot take.

The Greek piece is unsurpassed for grace of movement and tenderness of pathos, and these qualities are perfectly rendered in the English version. The six lines of the Greek become eight, however, in English, and there is some awkward redundancy in the first two of Mr. Cory's : still, little is added which is not implicit in the Greek—unless indeed the sentiment of the English be a shade less restrained.[1] For the sake of any reader who may not remember the Greek I add a severely literal translation in prose :

They told me, Heracleitus, of thy fate, and brought me to tears, and I remembered how often both of us let the sun sink

[1] For a criticism to this effect, see below, p. 372.

as we talked; but thou, methinks, O friend from Halicarnassus, art ashes long ago; yet thy nightingales live, and on these Hades, the robber of all things, shall not lay his hand.

Mr. Cory's own Greek epigram, which he called "Remember," and for which he wrote also an English version, is less familiar, for it appeared only in the later editions of his poems:

You come not, as aforetime, to the headstone every day,
And I, who died, I do not chide because, my friend, you play;
Only, in playing, think of him who once was kind and dear,
And, if you see a beauteous thing, just say, he is not here.

The English follows the Greek almost word for word, and Mr. Cory has caught to perfection the Greek note of restrained pathos. There is a piece, also called "Remember," by another poet, with which I often contrast it:

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go, yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you planned:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve;
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

A page might be written in drawing out the

contrast between the morbid note in these exquisite lines by Miss Rossetti and the virile sanity through all its tenderness in Mr. Cory's imitation of the Greek manner.

Which is the best epigram in the Anthology? Mr. Mackail, who must have weighed and reweighed each piece in the course of making and revising his selection, has given us his answer. The two lines of Plato's on Aster (vii. 670) are "perhaps the most perfect epigram ever written in any language." The lines are known to every lover of poetry in Shelley's version of them:

> Thou wert the Morning Star among the living
> Ere thy fair light was fled;
> Now, having died, thou art as Hesperus, giving
> New splendour to the dead.

A perfect epigram by the divine Plato translated by the beautiful angel and kindred spirit of English poetry—what better can be sought for or declared? Yet is it certain that the most perfect epigram has been the most perfectly translated? Shelley, as Mr. Mackail says, has made the Greek lines "live again in English," and his version is beautiful, but it has not quite the same beauty as that of the Greek original. Mr. Mackail's own literal translation in prose—though marred, I think, by one word ("deceased")[1]—will serve to recall to those

[1] It is, for poetical purposes, "a good word ruined"—not, in the way discussed in Chapter VI., by essential alteration of meaning, but by association with legal and undertakers' usage.

who may not have the Greek in mind the qualities of the original :

Morning Star, that once didst shine among the living, now deceased thou shinest the Evening Star among the dead.

Shelley's version misses something that is in the Greek and that is of the essence of its epigrammatic form—namely, the repetition "didst shine," "shinest" (ἔλαμπες, λάμπεις) ; and it adds something that is not in the Greek and that is foreign to the spirit of it. The severe restraint and economy of feeling which mark the original are changed by Shelley's "fair light" and "new splendour." At any rate the fact that a great poet had already made the lines alive in English has not deterred other translators from trying and showing their hand at the same task. Here are three published versions :

Erstwhile the star of dawn thy light on living men was shed ;
But now in death an evening star, thou'rt light among the dead.

Aster, in life our Morning Star, a lovely light you shed ;
And now you shine as Hesperus, a star among the dead.

Star that didst on the living at dawn thy lustre shed,
Now as the star of evening thou shinest with the dead.

Of these three versions the first misses some of the point and felicity of the original by speaking of "an" evening star. The Morning and the Evening star are the same, and another epigram in the Anthology plays upon this fact.[1] The

[1] By Meleager (xii. 114). It has been well rendered by Mr. Pott.

last version (which is by Sir Rennell Rodd) seems to me the best. It is nearer to the original than Shelley's, and is beautiful in itself; yet hardly so beautiful, and not so perfectly reproductive of the Greek, as to supersede Shelley's. Perhaps the trammels of English rhyme will prevent the epigram from ever being quite perfectly translated. "It were as wise," wrote Shelley himself, "to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its colour and odour, as seek to transfuse from one language into another the creations of a poet."

# APPENDIX TO CHAPTER VIII

## A List of Translations in English from the Greek Anthology with some Notes and Examples.

This bibliographical list is arranged chronologically. It is as full as a limited opportunity for research in the reading room of the British Museum has enabled me to make it. To compile a list of the kind which could be guaranteed as complete would entail a search in periodicals and volumes of minor verse more prolonged than I have been able to make or than perhaps it would be worth any one's while to make. I hope, however, that no serious omission will be found. A glance through the list will confirm what is said above about the continuing appeal made by the Greek Anthology to different minds in different ages.

The interest taken in the Anthology is resumed from age to age, but there are gaps and stages. The Planudean Anthology was first printed, as already said, in 1494, and it was reprinted from time to time. This is the source of Elizabethan versions and of Kendall's *Flowers of Epigrammes* (No. 1). Not till the nineteenth century do the entries become numerous. The revival of interest was due to the editing of the Palatine Anthology (above, p. 298). The MS. was removed from Heidel-

berg to the Vatican in 1623 and was taken to Paris in 1797. "The fame of this literary trophy spread far and wide, and drew to Paris," we are told, "as to a magnet all the German *savants* eager to collate manuscript copies and edited texts." The great editions of Jacobs founded on the Palatine MS. appeared between 1797 and 1817, and these were the sources from which many of our English translators worked.

Lord Neaves (No. 31) attributes to "Maga" the credit for first exhibiting the true character of the Greek epigrams in English translation, but this remark does injustice to an earlier editor. The true pioneer was the Rev. Robert Bland (No. 9), of whose work an interesting bibliographical account will be found in the preface, by his co-adjutor, J. H. Merivale, to the edition of 1833 (No. 16). Bland's work was the basis of all volumes of English versions for many years.

The next landmark was the eloquent and widely read essay by Mr. J. A. Symonds in the first volume of his *Studies of the Greek Poets*, published in 1873 (No. 30).

Finally Mr. Mackail's volume of *Select Epigrams*, first published in 1890 (No. 38), has been followed by a large number of verse translations.

It has struck me in looking through these volumes how often the same epigrams are chosen by different translators, and how seldom any translator goes outside Mr. Mackail's selection. The latter point is a testimony to his admirable taste. The former suggests how difficult is the task of translating these little poems into English verse. The many fail, the one succeeds, but each translator in turn is seemingly dissatisfied with the attempts of his predecessors. And to a large extent the dissatisfaction is justified, for on the whole the more recent versions are better than the earlier. I do not

think that an impeccable selection of the best versions, and of none but the best, has yet been put forth.

(1) 1577. Flowers of Epigrammes out of sundrie the moste singular authors selected, as well auncient as late writers. Pleasant and profitable to the expert readers of quicke capacitie. By Timothe Kendall, late of the Universitie of Oxford; now student of Staple Inne in London. . . .

A reprint of this book was issued at Manchester in 1874 as No. 15 of the publications of the Spenser Society. Sixty "Epigrammes out of Greek," in English verse, occupy pp. 136-151. The greater number of the versions are of epigrams in the ordinary sense, but some epitaphs and other pieces are included. As an example of Kendall's quality here is his version of Lucian's epitaph for a child (above, p. 317):

The frowning fates have taken hence
Callimachus, a childe
Five years of age: ah well is he
From cruell care exilde.
What though he liv'd but little tyme,
Waile nought for that at all:
For as his yeres not many were,
So were his troubles small.

(2) 1629. Η τῆς ἀνθολογίας Ανθολογία. Florilegium Epigrammatum Greccorum, eorumque Latino versu a variis redditorum. London.

This volume, by T. Farnaby, is of further interest as containing the first publication of Bacon's English paraphrase from the Anthology (see above, p. 302). Mr. Spedding accepts Farnaby's ascription of the piece as settling the matter (Bacon's *Works*, vii. 269).

(3) 1655. Musarum Deliciae or The Muses' Recreation. Containing several select pieces of sportive wit. By Sir J. M(ennis) and Ja. S(mith). London.

Second edition, 1656. Reprinted 1817, 1874. This collection of facetiae and minor verse contains a few pieces translated or imitated from the Greek Anthology. Two facetious epigrams on noses

are given from this source in the *Anthologia Polyglotta* (No. 23). There is also a free version of Plato's piece on Aster (see above, p. 348).

> As the pale moon, and stars shin'd clearly bright,
> My fairest faire stood gazing on the skyes :
> O that I had beene heaven then, that I might
> Have view'd my Stella with so many eyes.

(4) 1712. No. 551 of The Spectator, December 2, 1712, contains verse translations of seven pieces in the Anthology.

The paper was suggested, says Addison, "as I turned over those epigrams which are the remains of several of the wits of Greece, and perceived many dedicated to the fame of those who had excelled in beautiful poetic performances. Wherefore, in pursuance of my thought, I concluded to do something along with them to bring their praises into a new light and language, for the encouragement of those whose modest tempers may be deterred by the fear of envy or detraction from fair attempts, to which their parts might render them equal." (For a further reference to the paper, see above, p. 205.)

The versions include the epigram of Ion on Euripides, of which another version has been given above (p. 309) :

> Divine Euripides, this tomb we see
> So fair, is not a monument for thee,
> So much as thou for it ; since all will own
> Thy name and lasting praise adorn the stone.

(5) 1734. The London Magazine, or Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer.

This contains several verse translations from the *Anacreontea* and one or two from epigrams in the Anthology.

(6) 1799. The Idler, by Samuel Johnson, with Additional Essays. London : C. Cooke.

One of the Additional Essays, "An Essay on Epitaphs," contains translations, in Latin verse and English prose, of the two epigrams given above, p. 321.

(7) 1800. Odes of Anacreon, translated into English verse, with Notes. By Thomas Moore. London: John Stockdale.

At the end of his version of *Anacreontea* Moore gives translations of several of the pieces in the Anthology which have Anacreon for their subject. In his copious footnotes, which, according to Mr. Bullen, are "the most attractive part of Moore's volume," he gives versions of fifteen other pieces from the Anthology.

This volume was very popular; new editions appeared in 1802, 1803, 1804, and several later years; and the book may have served to call attention to the Anthology.

(8) 1805, 1806. The Monthly Magazine, or British Register, vols. 19-22.

These contain a series of articles on the Greek Anthology with many verse translations. Most of the articles are signed "Narva."

(9) 1806. Translations, Chiefly from the Greek Anthology: With Tales and Miscellaneous Poems. London: Richard Phillips.

Published anonymously. The author was the Rev. Robert Bland, who was assisted by J. H. Merivale and Francis Hodgson. A large part of the contents of the volume had appeared during 1805 and 1806 in the *Monthly Magazine*. Bland was an assistant-master at Harrow when Byron was a schoolboy there. "I have always had a great respect for his talents," wrote Byron to their mutual friend Francis Hodgson, "and for what I know of his character; but of me, I believe he knows nothing, except that he heard my sixth form repetitions ten months together at the average of two lines a morning, and those never perfect." In *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* Byron took occasion to praise Bland's book:

> And you, associate bards, who snatch'd to light
> Those gems too long withheld from modern sight;
> Whose mingling taste combined to cull the wreath
> Where Attic flowers Aonian odours breathe,
> And all their renovated fragrance flung,
> To grace the beauties of your native tongue;
> Now let those minds, that nobly could transfuse
> The glorious spirit of the Grecian muse,
> Though soft the echo, scorn a borrow'd tone:
> Resign Achaia's lyre and strike your own.

In a note afterwards added to this passage Byron said that the translators of the Anthology "have since published separate poems, which evince genius that only requires opportunity to obtain eminence." The separate poems did not fulfil Byron's prediction, but his notice of the translations from the Anthology helped to give vogue to the book, and encouraged the taste for translations from the Anthology. Several new translations appeared in Aikin's *Athenæum* (No. 10), and a fresh collection was issued in 1813 (No. 11).

(10) 1808, 1809. The Athenæum, conducted by J. Aikin.

In vol. 3, pp. 41-45, 341-344, 437-441, in vol. 4, pp. 38-41, 133-134, 230-232, and in vol. 5, pp. 37-39, 132-134 are, "Observations on, and Selections from, the Greek Anthology," containing many verse translations signed "Narva."

(11) 1813. Collections from the Greek Anthology. . . . By the Rev. Robert Bland and others. London: John Murray.

(12) 1814. Greece. A Poem. By William Haygarth. London: G. & W. Nicol.

The "Notes and Classical Illustrations," appended to the poem, include, on pp. 141, 148, 149, 182, 213, metrical versions from the Anthology.

(13) 1814. Specimens of the Classic Poets. . . . Translated into English verse by Charles Abraham Elton. Three vols. London: R. Baldwin.

In the first volume a few versions from the Greek Anthology (Simonides and Meleager) are given.

(14) 1815. Poems by William Cowper. Vol. iii. containing his posthumous poems. London: Rivington.

Cowper's *Translations of Greek Verses* include thirty-eight pieces from the Anthology. They were "begun," says his editor, "August 1799" (the year before Cowper's death).

(15) 1832. The Quarterly Review, October, No. 95, vol. 48.

An article on "Greek Elegy" contains a few verse translations from the Anthology.

(16) 1833. Collections from the Greek Anthology. By the late Rev. Robert Bland and others. A new edition. . . . By J. H. Merivale. London: Longman.

A revised edition of the book published in 1806 and 1813 (Nos. 9, 11), but three-fourths were additions (Preface, p. x). Among contributors were Rev. Francis Hodgson, H. N. Coleridge, and the editor's son, Charles Merivale. This enlarged edition contains verse translations of nearly 400 pieces.

(17) 1833. The Greek Anthology. Five articles in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, June, July, August, September, and December, vol. 33, pp. 865-888, and vol. 34, pp. 115-140, 255-284, 373-428, and 961-998.

This very interesting miscellany by "Christopher North" began as a review of Bland's collection of versions (see above), but the first article seems to have aroused much interest among scholars; and in the later articles Christopher North included many versions contributed by friends and correspondents, especially by William Hay and Francis Wrangham, also many by himself.

(18) 1838. Select Translations from the Greek Minor Poets, to which are added a few Specimens from the Anthologia Graeca. By R. Swainson Fisher. London: Simpkin, Marshall.

Contains 52 verse translations from the Anthology.

(19) 1838. Simonides. By John Sterling. An essay in The London and Westminster Review. Reprinted in 1848 in Essays and Tales by John Sterling. London: J. W. Parker. Vol. i. pp. 188-251.

This essay contains 102 verse translations of pieces by Simonides.

(20) 1839. The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Edited by Mrs. Shelley. Four vols. London: Edward Moxon.

This was the first edition of Shelley's *Poems* which contained his four translations from the Anthology. That of Plato's epigram on Aster has been given above, p. 354. Shelley had prefixed the Greek of it to *Adonais*. Medwin asked him if he could render it. "He took up the pen and improvised. . . . I said the version was too paraphrastic, and suggested the following:

> Thou wert a morning star to us,
> And dying art our Hesperus—

and in Latin, which I have taken as one of the epigraphs of these volumes—

> Tu, vivens, vivis, fers lucem, ut stella diei,
> At nunc heu moriens! Hesperus, Aster eris."

(*Life of Shelley*, vol. ii. p. 176.)

Another of Shelley's versions is given on p. 343. A third adds splendour to the anonymous epigram (vii. 62) on the Soul of Plato ("Eagle, why soarest thou?" etc.). The fourth is a paraphrase of the epigram (v. 78) on Agathon the dramatist, which is ascribed to Plato and which, if authentic, was written, says Mr. Mackail, under the person of Socrates:

> Kissing Helena, together
> With my kiss, my soul beside it,
> Came to my lips, and there I kept it,—
> For the poor thing had wandered thither,
> To follow where the kiss should guide it,
> Oh, cruel I, to intercept it.

It is interesting to compare Moore's piece:

> Whene'er thy nectared kiss I sip,
> And drink thy breath, in melting twine,
> My soul then flutters to my lip
> Ready to fly and mix with thine.

Shelley's "Kissing Helena" was a recollection of a famous passage in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, which itself may in part have been a recollection of a Greek epigram (see above, p. 305):

Was this the face that launched a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilion?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.
Her lips suck forth my soul! See where it flies.
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
Here will I dwell, for heav'n is in these lips
And all is dross that is not Helena.

(21) 1842. The Greek Anthology, as selected for the Use of Westminster, Eton, and other Public Schools. Literally translated into English prose, chiefly by George Burges. To which are added metrical versions by Bland, Merivale, and others. A volume in "Bohn's Classical Library."

The volume includes some new metrical versions by Burges and others.

(22) 1847. Specimens of the Poets and Poetry of Greece and Rome. By various translators. Edited by William Peter, A.M., of Christ Church, Oxford. Philadelphia: Carey & Hart.

The Greek Anthology is largely represented, the translations being mainly by Bland, Merivale, and *Blackwood's* contributors, but a few pieces are by Peter himself.

(23) 1849. Anthologia Polyglotta. A selection of versions in various languages, chiefly from the Greek Anthology. By Henry Wellesley, D.D., Principal of New Inn Hall, Oxford. London: John Murray.

Verse translations of 538 pieces. The versions were in large part collected from previously published works, but Oxford scholars of the time contributed many new versions. There are some by J. W. Burgon, many by Goldwin Smith, and more by Wellesley. A large number of Italian versions were contributed by Count Allessandro Mortara, then resident at Oxford. Of the Latin versions most are taken from Grotius. Among the German, some are by Lessing and many by F. Jacobs and J. G. Herder.

(24) 1855. Specimens of Greek Anthology. Translated by Major Robert Guthrie Macgregor.

This privately printed brochure contains 140 verse translations, including many of the most admired pieces. The copy in the British Museum contains an autograph letter by the author sent with a presentation copy to Dr. Wellesley (see No. 23); also scathing MS. criticisms by some other scholar. The Major fell into errors of ascription by following Burges (see No. 21) and these prompted the critic to add a 141st epigram.

> Watch, Watcher! Greek sufficient learn,
> And with thy proper eyes the text discern.
> The blinker's guide no blear-eyed Burges be,
> Wouldst thou, a Scotchman, through a Scotch mist see.

For later publications by Macgregor see Nos. 25, 27.

(25) 1857. Epitaphs from the Greek. Translated by Major Robert Guthrie Macgregor of the Bengal Retired List. London: Nissen & Parker.

No date, but in the Preface reference is made to the privately printed volume of "two years ago." This volume contains 707 verse translations by Macgregor, and 52 of the Christian epitaphs translated by Miss M. A. Stodart. Macgregor was educated at Reading School under Valpy (author of a once familiar *Delectus*), and he tells us that in the Far East he kept up the interest in the classics fostered by that famous headmaster. Whenever an old school-fellow came in his way, or an old school-book turned up, "bringing memories of the pleasant Forbury and the silver Thames," or a classical article appeared in one of the Reviews, he was moved to try his hand again at versions from the Anthology. They are generally literal, but lack elegance, as may be seen from these versions of pieces of which other translations have been given above (pp. 352, 335):

> They told me, Heraclitus, thou wert gone
> From this our life. I wept to think thereon, etc.

> Had swift ships never been, lov'd Sopolis,
> Diocles's son, we had not mourn'd like this.
> His cold pale corpse is tost on seas unknown,
> His name and empty tomb are ours alone.

(26) 1858. Ionica. London : Smith, Elder & Co.

The version of "Heracleitus" (above, p. 352) appeared in this volume. The revised enlarged edition of 1891 (George Allen) contained also "A Serving-man's Epitaph" (see above, p. 319).

(27) 1864. Greek Anthology with Notes Critical and Explanatory. Translated by Major Robert Guthrie Macgregor. London : Nissen & Parker.

This final edition of the author's work on the Anthology contains verse translations of 5744 pieces.

(28) 1869. Idylls and Epigrams, Chiefly from the Greek Anthology. By Richard Garnett. London : Macmillan & Co.

The translations, imitations, and paraphrases, from the Anthology were separately published as *A Chaplet from the Greek Anthology*, Fisher Unwin : 1892. (A volume in the Cameo Series.) The *Chaplet* contains 167 pieces in verse.

(29) 1871. Miscellanies. By John Addington Symonds, M.D. Selected and edited, with an Introductory Memoir, by his son. London : Macmillan & Co.

"The few poems and translations inserted at the end of the volume have been selected from a great number of equal merit, as specimens of the lighter literary recreations which occupied the intervals of leisure in a very laborious life" (Preface). Nine of the translations are from the Anthology.

(30) 1873. Studies of the Greek Poets. [First Series.] By John Addington Symonds. Smith, Elder & Co.

The chapter (xi.) on "The Anthology" (pp. 341-397) contains a large number of verse translations—some quoted from previous collections, but in large part by Symonds himself. Second edition, 1877, third, 1893.

(31) 1874. The Greek Anthology. By Lord Neaves. William Blackwood & Sons. (A volume in the series of "Ancient Classics for English Readers.")

This volume contains a large number of verse translations—mostly selected from previous works, but several by Lord Neaves.

(32) 1878. "Chrysanthema gathered from the Greek Anthology," by William M. Hardinge. An article in the Nineteenth Century, November, vol. 4, pp. 869-888.

Mr. Hardinge (a Newdigate prizeman) gives 63 versions in various metres from the Anthology.

(33) 1881. Amaranth and Asphodel: Songs from the Greek Anthology. By Alfred J. Butler, Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford. London: Kegan Paul.

Verse translations of 140 pieces. Mr. Butler wrote his versions in Egypt. "After two thousand years," says the preface, "to render a Greek song about the Nile while sailing down the same river, a song about Memphis or the Pyramids in sight of their ruins and remains, a song about the great lighthouse at Alexandria while living on the very island of Pharos where it stood, is perhaps a pleasure every one will not appreciate. But beyond this sentimental interest, life in the East has had its uses in giving fresh insight into some phases of Greek thought or habit. . . . One finds much in Eastern life that belonged also to Greek life—customs and ideas older than the very name of Hellas, and lasting with little change since they were received by the Hellenes."

Of his principles of translation Mr. Butler says: "As a rule, it will be found that the renderings are literal and the order unchanged; all stanzas of ten-syllable lines alternately rhyming—and these are the far greatest majority of the whole—correspond line for line with the Greek. Where the mood of the original has seemed to require a lyric metre, I have still always preserved a fixed proportion: if, for example, an elegiac poem is turned into rhyming triplets, each couplet of the Greek answers to a triplet in the English. This law of quantitative correspondence is one which translators from Pope downwards have treated too cavalierly; to me it seems essential. The model," etc., as quoted above, p. 342.

(34) 1883. Love in Idleness. A volume of poems. London: Kegan Paul & Co.

This volume was published anonymously, but most of the poems were reprinted in 1891 in a volume entitled *Love's Looking-Glass* (London: Percival), and the pieces were then ascribed to

the several authors, namely, H. C. Beeching, J. W. Mackail, and J. B. B. Nichols. The translations trom the Anthology were mostly by H. C. Beeching. See below, No. 42.

(35) 1887. Rhymes and Renderings. Cambridge : Macmillan & Bowes.

"Renderings from the Greek," by F. E. G(arrett), pp. 48-69, include eleven pieces from the Anthology.

(36) 1888. Grass of Parnassus. First and Last Rhymes. By Andrew Lang. London : Longmans.

New Edition, 1892. "The Little Garland," pp. 155-190, contains 35 verse translations from the Anthology. In his preface (1892) Mr. Lang says : "The author cannot resist the pleasure of mentioning that the versions from the Greek Anthology were prompted by the encouraging kindness of the late Mr. James Russell Lowell." One of the versions (see above, p. 314) is widely familiar from being inserted in Sir H. Rider Haggard's *Cleopatra*.

(37) 1889. Selections from the Greek Anthology. Edited by Graham R. Tomson. The translations by Dr. Richard Garnett, Mr. Andrew Lang, Miss Alma Stretell, Mr. Goldwin Smith, Mr. W. M. Hardinge, and others. Walter Scott.

The translations by Miss Alma Stretell, and a few by Professor Lewis Campbell and Mr. Edmund Gosse appeared for the first time in this volume.

(38) 1890. Select Epigrams from the Greek Anthology. Edited with a Revised Text Introduction Translation and Notes by J. W. Mackail, Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford. London : Longmans.

Second edition, 1906, third, 1911. This last edition contains literal prose translations of 499 pieces.

(39) 1890. Fifty Poems by Meleager. With a translation by Walter Headlam. London : Macmillan.

What so accomplished a scholar says about his choice of metres is worth noting : "Ten syllable iambics can rarely give the effect

of Greek elegiacs. For poems of a somewhat severe style, as the epitaphs of Simonides, they may serve, though too short ; and are suited to epigrams in our narrowed English sense, and especially when of only two lines ; but for poems whose excellence is their melody and grace they are not only too short, but too stiff and too slow. I am sure that the movement of the elegiac couplet is generally best rendered by the simple quatrain I have most often used, though this, in its turn, is a little over-long. It is not unnecessary to say that correspondence in length is not to be judged by counting syllables. Greek is longer than English, owing to perfection of structure not so much as would appear from comparison of the separate words, but still slightly longer on the whole."

(40) 1891. From the Garden of Hellas. Translations into verse from the Greek Anthology. By Lilla Cabot Perry. New York : J. W. Lovell.

Contains 89 pieces. The translator claims that her selection is more widely representative, and her translation more literal, than those of most collections.

(41) 1891. Songs of Energy. By Morley Roberts. London : Lawrence & Bullen.

Contains a good verse translation of an epigram by Marianus.

(42) 1895. In a Garden and Other Poems. By H. C. Beeching. London : John Lane.

Contains eleven translations from the Anthology, mostly of pieces by Meleager. Compare No. 34.

(43) 1895. Safe Studies. By the Hon. Mr. and Mrs. Lionel A. Tollemache. William Rice.

The "Translations" include five in verse from the Anthology.

(44) 1898. Anthologia Graeca Erotica. The Love Epigrams or Book V. of the Palatine Anthology. Edited and partly rendered into English verse by W. R. Paton. London : David Nutt.

Mr. Paton's versions are generally somewhat free. Here is his

rendering of a piece by Asclepiades, of which another version has been given above (p. 314) :

> Sweet on a thirsty summer day
> A cup of snow ; sweeter to play
> With the first garland of the may
> And know the winter's done.
> Sweetest of all two lovers lying
> Beneath one plaid with no more sighing,
> No half-confessing, half-denying
> Love, who has made them one.

(45) 1899. An Echo of Greek Song. Englished by W. H. D. Rouse. London : J. M. Dent.

Verse translations of 140 pieces in the Anthology.

(46) 1901. Rose Leaves from Philostratus and Other Poems. By Percy Osborn. London : At the Sign of the Unicorn.

This contains a good sonnet, entitled "Amor Mysticus," after a piece by Marianus (App. Plan. 201). The title is that given by Mr. Mackail to the Greek piece.

(47) 1903. Paraphrases and Translations from the Greek. By the Earl of Cromer. London : Macmillan.

The greater part of this volume is taken up with metrical versions of 124 pieces from the Anthology. In a preface Lord Cromer mentions that he learnt no Greek at school. On first receiving a commission in the army he was sent to Corfu, where he acquired a fair colloquial acquaintance with modern Greek. This caused him to take interest in classical Greek, and he amused himself "during the leisure moments of a busy life" by making these translations.

(48) 1906. Poems and Translations. By Arundell Esdaile. London : Elkin Mathews.

Four of the translations are from the Anthology.

(49) 1907. A Book of Greek Verse. By Walter Headlam. Cambridge University Press.

Contains several verse translations from the Anthology, together with several versions into Greek from Heine, Wordsworth, and other poets to illustrate the affinity between them and the Greek.

In one of many interesting notes, Mr. Headlam finds fault with William Cory's famous version of Heracleitus (above, p. 352). The note of Callimachus is, he says, restraint, and in Cory's version the sentiment is too effusive: he has turned *vin sec* into sweet. Mr. Headlam gives a version, with which, however, he confesses that he was far from satisfied.

(50) 1908. Poems from the Greek Anthology attempted in English Verse. By G. H. Cobb, M.A., Oriel College. Oxford: B. H. Blackwell.

Contains 34 pieces.

(51) 1911. Greek Love Songs and Epigrams from the Anthology. Translated by J. A. Pott. London: Kegan Paul.

168 verse translations. Mr. Pott says: "The strict canons of translation laid down by some authorities—for example, Mr. Arthur Symonds[1]—are not, I think, applicable to renderings of Greek Poetry. Not only is it true that imitations of classical metres are rarely successful in English, but also that the elegiac couplet is used for a great variety of subjects, some of which inevitably suggest the use of particular measures in our language; but if the adoption of French forms such as the Rondel, Lai, or Triolet be a mistake, at least I err in excellent company."

(52) 1912. Herbert [Snow, afterwards] Kynaston. A Short Memoir, with Selections from his Occasional Writings. By the Rev. E. D. Stone. London: Macmillan.

Translations from the Greek, pp. 3-27, include twelve versions from the Anthology. One of the versions has been cited by a writer in the *Spectator* ("Translations," by Lord Esher, Aug. 17, 1918) as one of the most successful in existence. After noticing Mr. Cory's version of the epigram by Callimachus (above, p. 352), Lord Esher says: "Of paraphrases perhaps the most perfect in form and in happy grasp of the spirit of a poem is by another Eton master, the late Herbert Snow. It has passed comparatively unnoticed by

[1] Meaning Mr. Arthur Symons or Mr. Addington Symonds?

collectors of rare and beautiful verse. Many have tried their skill upon Meleager's dirge, and Dr. Hawtrey's version was worthy of his transcendent knowledge and workmanship, but he was distanced in this by the less-known scholar and poet :

Still my tears for thee unceasing flow,
Still though thou art laid below,
These affections, lingering drops I pour,
Heliodore !

Bitter tears : which shed, while yet they lave
This thy lamentable grave,
Wild regrets that love's fond memories store,
Heliodore !

Piteously for love among the dead
Meleager's heart hath bled,
Heaping sighs on Acheron's thankless shore,
Heliodore !

Lightly under thine enriching mould
To a mother's breast enfold,
Earth, I pray thee, her whom all deplore,
Heliodore !

The version is very good. Whether it or Mr. Lang's (above, p. 314) is the better Cambridge and Oxford must decide.

Dr. Hawtrey's version in elegiacs is this :

Though the earth hide thee, yet there, even there, my Heliodore,
All that is left I give, tears of my love to thy grave.
Tears how bitterly shed on thy tomb bedewed by my weeping,
Pledge of my fond regret, pledge of affection for thee.
Piteously, piteously still, but in vain grieves on Meleager :
Thou art among the dead : Acheron heeds not my woe.
Where is the flower that I loved? Death has torn it away in the springtide,
Torn it away, and the dust stains the fair leaves in their bloom.
Genial earth, be it thine, at the mourner's humble entreaty,
Gently to hold in thine arms her whom I ever deplore.

(53) 1913. Greek Love Songs and Epigrams from the Anthology. Translated by J. A. Pott. Second Series. London : Kegan Paul.

171 verse translations. Mr. Pott here urges that "there are cases in which an elegiac couplet is rendered better by an English quatrain than by a distich," and as an apology for some degree

of freedom quotes an entertaining passage from Cowley: "If a man should undertake to translate Pindar word for word, it would be thought that one madman had translated another, as may appear when he that understands not the original reads the verbal traduction of him into Latin Prose, than which nothing appears more raving; and sure rhyme without the addition of wit and the spirit of posie (*quod nequeo monstare sed sentio tantum*) would make it ten times more frantic; this is in some measure to be applied to all translations."

(54) 1913. Ancient Gems in Modern Settings, being Versions of the Greek Anthology in English Rhyme. By various writers. Edited by G. B. Grundy, D.Litt. Oxford: B. H. Blackwell.

352 pieces. Most of the versions are selected from previous works, but a large number are by Dr. Grundy himself. The volume also includes a few not previously published versions by Lord Cromer; also some by J. A. Symonds from a privately printed book called *Rhaetica*.

(55) 1913. Minor Greek Poetry in English. By Arundell Esdaile. An article in The Poetry Review, September, pp. 138-150.

The article includes a few original versions from the Anthology.

(56) 1914. Lux Juventutis. A Book of Verses. By Katharine A. Esdaile. London: Constable.

"Translations," pp. 79-81, include 6 from the Anthology.

(57) 1916. Love, Worship, and Death. Some Renderings from the Greek Anthology. By Sir Rennell Rodd. Edward Arnold.

Four pieces from Sappho; 5 *Anacreontica*; and 45 others. "To myself," says Sir Rennell, "who have lived for some years in that enchanted world of Greece, and have sailed from is and to island of its haunted seas, the shores have seemed still quick with the voices of those gracious presences who gave exquisite form to their thoughts on life and death, their sense of awe and beauty and love."

Second edition, enlarged, 1919.

(58) 1916. The Spirit of Man: An Anthology in English and French from the Philosophers and Poets made by the Poet Laureate in 1915. London: Longmans.

No. 28 is a verse translation by Mr. Bridges of an anonymous epigram in the Greek Anthology (App. Plan. 12).

(59) 1916–1918. The Greek Anthology, with an English Translation by W. R. Paton. Five volumes. London: Heinemann.

In the Loeb Classical Library. The translations are in prose.

(60) 1919. Echoes from the Greek Anthology. By J. G. Legge. London: Constable.

Verse translations of 102 pieces.

(61) 1919. The *Nation* (London), February 12, "The Nine Epigrams of Zonas"; April 12, "Epitaphs by Callimachus."

Prose translations by Winifred Bryher.

(62) 1919. The *Spectator*, March 15, contained a letter from Sir Herbert Warren, headed "Sir Richard Jebb's Favourite Epigram."

Sir Herbert's translation of the epigram is quoted above, p. 333.

As usually happens, the publication of one translation from the Anthology caused the publication of another, and to a following number of the *Spectator* (March 29) Mr. C. R. Haines sent his version of "Simonides's Perfect Epigram." It is a good one also. I notice that Mr. Haines describes Tegea not as a city of dancing spaces, but as "with its wide ways." Either translation is better than that of Sterling (No. 19), who does not translate the epithet at all:

> Through these men's valour into stainless air
> The smoke of Tegea's ruin did not burst;
> They chose their sons should dwell in freedom there,
> And they themselves should fall amid the first.

The epithet is εὐρύχορος. What precisely does it mean? The President of Magdalen connects it with χορός (a dance or a place for dancing), and takes it to mean a city well provided with dancing grounds. Liddell and Scott say that εὐρύχορος is merely an alternative form of εὐρύχωρος, meaning "with broad places, roomy, spacious." Mr. Mackail in his translation of the epigram has "wide-floored Tegea." Pope in translating the word in the *Odyssey* (xv. 1) combines both meanings, "ample plains, Famed for the dance." In Homer εὐρύχορος is almost a standing epithet for a city. Perhaps it was a matter of course with the Greeks that a town should be "planned" with open spaces, just as every self-respecting Italian city, and even village, requires a *piazza*.

Just as this page is going to press I notice in *The Times Literary Supplement* of July 3 that Mr. Warde Fowler cites the same Tegean epitaph of Simonides as "A Perfect Memorial to the Fallen." "It has already lasted," he says, "some 2500 years, and is destined to last as long as the world is willing to preserve the exquisite language of the early Greeks. . . . It is not so famous as the one by the same poet in memory of the heroes of Thermopylae, but it is simpler, and in my opinion even more perfect. To reproduce it in translation is simply impossible. . . We know now that nothing but the spirit of our soldiers, the same spirit which the poet has touched so inimitably in his last two lines, saved us from the sight of the smoke of burning English villages ascending to heaven. They too deserve such a memorial as this."

In the *Spectator*, March 1, 1919, there are some graceful verses by Mr. Alfred Perceval Graves "On an English Reprint of the Greek Anthology." I have quoted the first two lines at the head of the preceding chapter. The whole piece would make an excellent

motto for the ideal collection of the best English translations of the best epigrams in the Anthology. Of the peculiar difficulty of translating them aright, enough has been said on preceding pages. Of the difficulty of translation in general, the precept and the practice of Dryden alike are evidence. "A translator," he says, "is to make his author appear as charming as possibly he can, provided he maintains his character, and makes him not unlike himself. Translation is a kind of drawing after the life; where every one will acknowledge there is a double sort of likeness, a good one and a bad. 'Tis one thing to draw out the lines true, the features like, the proportions exact, the colouring itself perhaps tolerable; and another thing to make all these graceful, by the posture, the shadowings, and chiefly by the spirit which animates the whole. I cannot, without some indignation, look on an ill copy of an excellent original. Much less can I behold with patience Virgil, Homer, and some others, whose beauties I have been endeavouring all my life to imitate, so abused, as I may say, to their faces, by a botching interpreter. . . . A good poet is no more like himself, in a dull translation, than his carcase would be to his living body. There are many who understand Greek and Latin and yet are ignorant of their mother tongue. . . . A man should be a nice critic in his mother tongue before he attempts to translate a foreign language. Neither is it sufficient that he be able to judge of words and style; but he must be a master of them too. He must perfectly understand his author's tongue, and absolutely command his own. So that, to be a thorough translator, he must be a thorough poet. Neither is it enough to give his author's sense in good English, in poetical expressions, and in musical numbers; for, though all these are exceeding difficult to perform,

there yet remains an harder task; and 'tis a secret of which few translators have sufficiently thought. I have already hinted a word or two concerning it; that is, the maintaining the character of an author, which distinguishes him from all others, and makes him appear that individual poet whom you would interpret."[1] But, alas! though Dryden was a great poet, it has been said of him that he "was not a translator at all. His 'Virgil' is in no sense Virgil, but Dryden simply."[2]

[1] "Preface concerning Mr. Dryden's Translations."
[2] *The Literary Remains of Charles Stuart Calverley*, p. 191.

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[1] The references are to the Palatine Anthology and appendices. A reader who has access only to Mr. Mackail's *Select Epigrams* will find at p. 431 of that book an index showing where each epigram as numbered in the Palatine collection may be found in Mr. Mackail's rearrangement.

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